DÆDALUS

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The Nordic Enigma

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Hans F. Dahl
Per Olov Enquist
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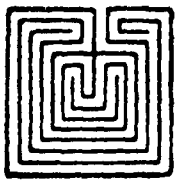

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Preface to the Issue, "The Nordic Enigma"

WHO HAS EVER THOUGHT to represent Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden as the enigmatic North? What mystery can possibly attach to this group of countries that are so little given to secrecy, that appear so open to the gaze of outsiders, that seem so settled in their ways, so rational in their policies, so uncomplicated in their national mores and habits? Do the flattering views made famous by Marquis Childs, the American journalist of the 1930s, no longer describe contemporary Sweden, and indeed the whole of the prosperous and secure Nordic world? Are these not the "gardens" of our late twentieth century universe? Childs, writing his *Sweden: The Middle Way* at a time when the European democracies were dispirited and divided, when totalitarianism appeared to be in the ascendancy almost everywhere, when war threatened and the whole of European civilization was thought to be at risk, insisted that whatever the future might bring, "there will remain the record of a people who cultivated their garden, their rocky, remote, lonely garden, with patience, with courage, and with an extraordinary degree of intelligence."

Has the Nordic world not persisted in its purpose of creating a more humane society, dedicated to reason, justice, equality, peace? Why, then, is there no universal jubilation in its accomplishments? Why, at a time when dozens of other small states have taken their place in the international community, and when most of them are mired in poverty, overwhelmed by their internal and international squabbles, do these five Nordic democracies—each remarkable in its own way—not provide the models that new states (and old) seek to emulate? Is their achievement so extraordinary, complex, and so specific to their cultures and peoples, that imitation is excluded? Have they, however unwittingly, created social and political patents that

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are not replicable, that do not cross oceans, that depend on habits of tolerance and patience that other peoples lack, on values that others may pretend to share but do not in fact wholly understand or accept? Or, is it possible that, though the Nordic achievements have indeed exceeded the wildest ambitions of those who originally conceived them, the institutional reality is for many reasons today less satisfying than the original dream? The idea that everything once contemplated has been achieved, but that the savor of the accomplishment is less than anticipated, is indeed disconcerting. It raises fundamental questions about the worth of the objects pursued.

Is it at all conceivable that the Nordic world is today experiencing collectively the dilemma that John Stuart Mill experienced personally and described so eloquently in his *Autobiography,* a dilemma that led to what he euphemistically described as "a crisis in my mental history." Mill's "breakdown" came at a time when he "was in a dull state of nerves, such as everybody is occasionally liable to; unsusceptible to enjoyment of pleasurable excitement." Mill, with characteristic candor, wrote:

> In this frame of mind it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself: "Suppose that all your objects in life were realized; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you are looking forward to could be completely effected at this very instant: would this be a great joy and happiness to you?" And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, "No!" At this my heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, and how could there ever again be any interest in the means. I seemed to have nothing left to live for.

The Nordic world is an enigma today not because it has become suddenly mysterious, a riddle for others. Its enigmatic qualities derive from the fact that it is a problem to itself—it has realized much of what it set out to do, but its achievement has produced neither a new "race," a new "community," a new "civilization," nor a new "happiness." This does not imply that citizens of these advantaged societies fail to recognize or appreciate what they today enjoy, that they yearn to return to a more spartan existence, that they seek a more precarious way of living. The "welfare state" is on trial today in the Nordic countries not because many would do away with it, not even because many wish to alter it fundamentally, but because it appears not to

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have provided the satisfactions—perhaps not even the equality—that it promised. The Nordic countries afford an extraordinary contemporary image—they are successful by the criteria of twentieth century success—and yet the accomplishment is not enough. What is to be done?

Those who are most committed to existing social values insist that there is still a substantial distance to run, that if the achievement is indeed less than the promise, that new legislation will in time provide the fillip that will drive these societies to even greater rationality and more substantial justice. If, for example, several of these societies remain staunchly—though covertly—patriarchal, if men today still enjoy rights and privileges not granted to women, such an anachronism, explicable by history but remediable by law, must in time disappear, losing ground before the force of public opinion, not least the power of women at the polls. So, also, with other equally obnoxious vestigial institutional remains of a social past that was "feudal" or "capitalist," that waits to be dumped into the "ashcan of history." The state, the supreme engine of change in the Nordic world, is expected to create new institutions that will provide the equality which is said to be the passion of these peoples.

Not everyone in these Nordic societies is so sanguine. Among the young particularly, there is substantial disappointment and more than a little sense of grievance. In certain countries more than others, the young seem disaffected, genuinely unhappy with the policies that now prevail. Many, poorly educated despite the universal availability of education, are idle, living legally on the monies they are entitled to receive from the state. Whether they will ever be employed, or whether they will spend their lives in subsidized agitation—a condition unknown in any other period—is today a very open question. The social and political consequences of such a novel situation are scarcely reflected on. Others, in many instances better educated, appear to be "idling" their way through their twenties, finding no permanent employ, but enjoying some sort of ambiguous place in society. It is generally assumed that they are the "victims" of the world economic recession, that all will go well for them when economic conditions improve. The prizes of success—second homes, boats, automobiles, vacations abroad—the detritus of late twentieth century mass affluence, are expected to have the same appeal for them as they had for their parents and their older siblings. They, too, are

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expected to be seduced by the "good things" of our civilization; they will be accommodated, acculturated, incorporated. It is not impossible that those who argue in this way have correctly understood contemporary society, know that its problems are specific, not general, that they depend on pragmatic solutions of a kind the Nordic peoples are thought to be particularly adept in developing. Such a portrayal of the future is not inconceivable.

Still, one must ask why these "gardens"—which have achieved so much, which have demonstrated such remarkable capacities for social invention—are not the focus of world attention today. When so many new countries, small and struggling, purportedly preoccupied with equality and social welfare, would appear to have every incentive to seek instruction from others, why do they not make the Nordic societies their principal models? Is it that the North is concealing its face? Or, has the face lost its attractiveness? This is yet another aspect of the Nordic enigma, the riddle of a face that appears so hospitable and open to the outside world, that perpetually emphasizes the theme of mutual aid and cooperation, that stresses so unremittingly the importance of peace and equality, but that fails to win the acclaim it once did, at a time when that achievement was less, when its "great experiment" was only beginning. Is there in the world today a new generation of political leaders, for example, who look to the North in the way the captives of Nazi Europe once did? If so, where are these leaders? Who are they? What do they expect to find? If the Nordic world holds no great appeal for new elites, is this because that world has lost its luster, or is it that the world is moving beyond "social democracy," even as Social Democrats gain new power in new places?

It would be difficult to conceive of a more complex set of questions, of questions more calculated to generate heat and controversy. Yet, these are fundamental to any inquiry that seeks to establish why the Nordic societies, individually and collectively, appear as they do to the outside world, why some have lost their air of novelty, why—even to the sympathetic observer—they seem to be redolent of an earlier day. Several exude little of those qualities that we associate with modernity; they show nothing of the energy—not to speak of the "madness"—that some would attribute to the avant-garde, not only in the intellectual and cultural spheres, but in political and social life more generally. If Noel Annan is right when he says that the

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phrase " 'we live in a pluralist age' is the castrating cliché of our times," it is also true that, in our concern to generalize, we have lost something of the capacity to particularize, to make fine distinctions.

Our concern should be to see whether the Nordic world is indeed distinctive, whether it differs significantly from a world called Europe, or another called America. Beyond that, we need to see whether the five countries of this region, for all their substantial similarities, are not also significantly different. The possibility that Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland are no more like one another than the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands needs at least to be entertained. The task is to tell them apart, to know why and how each differs from the other, to realize that these differences do not necessarily translate into superiority and inferiority, that it is possible to dwell on these differences without giving offense. Indeed, the object of this whole volume (and of the one that follows) may be to assert that this is a world both more interesting and more various than it is commonly thought to be, but that its character and qualities will be rendered powerfully only if certain reticences are abandoned, if a certain candor is recognized to be essential.

Iceland is not in the position of Sweden. It has no recent imperial past to recollect or to ignore. Nor, for that matter, does it have a recent reputation as a center of "social experiment" to uphold. Its distinctiveness derives from its fidelity to a literary tradition that lives on for a population which even today does not quite reach a quarter of a million. This is its most remarkable trait—that a nation of this size, superficially so disadvantaged by geography and climate, has known how to take advantage of both, to create an economy that is, *sui generis*, inflation-ridden, with indexed salaries to protect against galloping prices, always on the brink of disaster, but managing artfully to avoid the abyss; its social and political order is democratic and free, uncluttered and unpatronizing. More than any other of the Nordic countries, Iceland has lived with the problem of its population size, recognizing why it is optimal for certain purposes and not for others, why certain institutions can be created at home, why others ought not to be. It has known how to use the world, accepting the fact that its "real estate" is one of its principal assets, that it will inevitably be used by others, but that this need not create either a sense of grievance or one of despair. Iceland, a historical reality, is

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also a modern artifact, a creation of twentieth century intelligence, that has never permitted itself the false luxury of exaggerating its own importance. Its modesty is a fundamental asset, as is its inventiveness. It is the undiscovered region of the Nordic world, largely unknown even to those outside who pretend to be interested in its existence. There is little evidence to suggest that very many Icelanders feel outraged by this neglect or would have it otherwise.

The volcanic world of fire and ice that is modern Iceland—a universe of hot springs and glaciers, of tundralike treeless landscape, of profound, almost mythic silences—takes on the quality of the sublime, particularly when contrasted with the more "civilized" beauty of contemporary Denmark, European both in its orientation and tastes. While Denmark retains vast dominions in the North Atlantic, the most conspicuous being Greenland—a largely unoccupied world inhabited principally by indigenous populations—the Faeroes are yet another extension of Denmark, as different from Greenland as both are from Iceland. Traveling in agriculturally affluent Jutland, admiring both the civilities and the freedom of contemporary Copenhagen, gazing on a hundred manor houses that speak of a past that was aesthetically fastidious, proudly and openly domestic, and clearly immune neither to fantasy nor to imagination, one asks whether any (or all) of these qualities survive today. One hears of humor, indeed of wickedness and wit, and one understands why language remains an insuperable obstacle, scarcely overcome by the fact that the Danes have mastered English. This is a continental society, but it is neither French nor German, certainly not the latter. Why, then, the difference? What precisely does it derive from? A vestigial memory of conquest, of heroism, of failure? Can any of this be read into the pallid faces of so many of the young, at least those who throng the streets of central Copenhagen? What sense of history, if any, survives in these people? How satisfied are they with the "goods" of contemporary civilization? What acceptance is there of Denmark's "dependence" on others, on Germany, on the United States? How do the Danes perceive their options? How, indeed, do they view their own creations—their educational system, their cultural institutions? What kinds of distinction do they covet? What do they believe they have already achieved? They appear very open, candid, gregarious. Yet, the answers to these questions do not come readily. The achievements are everywhere apparent; nevertheless, very few seem at all

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confident about the future. Is it because the superpowers are so reckless? Or, is there some more profound reason for the anxiety, one that has little to do with either the United States or the Soviet Union, and everything to do with Denmark? What, then, is not as it should be?

This is not nearly so preoccupying a problem for Norway. Whether it is Norway's more recent arrival at affluence, the closeness of the country to its nineteenth century past, the absence of great cities and the other social appurtenances of an advanced industrial society, or simply the advantages that derive from a certain remoteness from the great power centers of Europe, Norway—and not only because of the boon created by North Sea oil—gives the appearance of being a contented society, satisfied with itself, with its place in the world. Lacking anything that could be mistaken for an aristocratic past, having begun its twentieth century existence with a social equality that owed much to geography, to the isolation and self-sufficiency that remoteness imposed, it has accepted, with a grace that is winning and uncommon, the privileges of newfound leisure and economic ease. Measure is its motto, even as discretion appears to be its national habit. Neither creates a product, intellectual or material, that is intended to make great noise in the world. Norway lives largely for itself, finding in its own traditions, religious and cultural, a wholly acceptable national ethos. Making the greatest efforts to avoid launching itself on paths that will destroy whatever community already exists—aware that such community provides a security greater than any the state itself can provide—the villages and towns of the country, together with the few expanded nineteenth century cities that open onto some of the major fjords of the country, move cautiously into a twentieth century world with wholly new defense hazards and vastly greater economic potentialities.

Sweden is the great state of the Nordic universe, boasting a population substantially greater than that of any of its Nordic neighbors. Having for so long enjoyed a reputation for cosmopolitanism, seeing Denmark as its only rival in this sphere, and enjoying fame also for its scholarship and learning—both so useful to the creation of a state committed to bold and imaginative social experiment—it lives today with a deep consciousness that the expectations of yesterday, even when fulfilled, have not created the society once hoped for. It does no good to suggest that this is an age of "fallen dominations," that the "decline" of Sweden may be of a piece with the decline of other states

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which aspired to purposes no less noble. This is a proposition that Swedes find difficult to accept. They prefer to see themselves as still in the vanguard, showing the way to others, providing a moral and intellectual leadership that is more than ever necessary. That this may be a "grand illusion," and that it has little basis in fact, is what Swedes sometimes tell each other, but foreigners are not encouraged to spread such doctrines. They are thought to be heretical and mistaken, reflecting envy more than reason, making far too little allowance for all that has been accomplished in the social transformation of Sweden since the 1930s. Still, the absence of a sense of history, the refusal to recollect the past imaginatively, to be wholly critical even of all that has transpired in the twentieth century, creates an atmosphere that may be inhospitable to intellectual innovation.

Finland, like Iceland, belongs to the periphery of a periphery—or so, at least, it appears to those who acknowledge that the country is scarcely known in the West and not even well known by many of its Nordic neighbors. Again, the tale of "rags to riches" needs to be told, though in a form more nuanced than any that simply represent progress in terms of GNP figures or average personal income growth. From its association with Russia in the days of the Tsar—an association fundamentally different from that of any of the other arrangements acceptable to imperial Russia—through the days of civil war, following on the Russian Revolution, to the events of the Second World War, Finland has lived a history both more tragic and more heroic than that of any of its Nordic neighbors. In this century, war has shaped its destiny quite as much as peace has shaped that of Sweden. Inevitably, the two have lived by different values; even today, their geography, so superficially similar, creates uniquely different problems for each. This does not preclude many kinds of cooperation; the two are united by many common interests, not least in the sphere of defense. Being the nearest European neighbor of the Soviet Union, yet living outside the Warsaw Pact, imposes obligations on Finnish intelligence and diplomatic capability that are quite literally unique. The experience, however enervating, provides admirable opportunities for self-expression. Finland, like Sweden, prides itself on its neutral status; it defines that status, however, in ways that are peculiar to itself. In many respects, Finland stands alone, both belonging to the Nordic world and very self-consciously remaining outside.

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On any scale of values—and this needs to be constantly reiterated—the Nordic world is committed to peace, cooperation, and social progress. Whether that world is equally agreed about the meaning of honor, distinction, and achievement is much less obvious. The Nordic world, for the most part, is painfully reticent, asking too few questions about itself, refusing to gaze critically on what it has accomplished, paying all too little heed to qualities that were once thought paramount—courage, risk-taking, hospitality, friendship—the qualities of the Nordic sagas.

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S.R.G.

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W.R. Mead

Norden: Destiny and Fortune

"NORDEN" IS A RELATIVELY NEW WORD; it is the collective noun chosen by the five Nordic countries to replace what the rest of the world popularly calls Scandinavia, a word that the inhabitants of Norden consider to be a terminological inexactitude. Geography is concerned with the location and nature of the space that man occupies on the globe. The fact that a common word is being applied to the space occupied by Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden suggests that their peoples share a measure of community. In their wider geographical setting, the five countries are of course aware of certain common features and constraints. At the same time, each country is moved by the physical characteristics and resources of the area within its own political boundaries. In cultivating its own plot, each has acquired, and expresses itself in, a distinct personality. Norden is therefore a product of art and artifice. It is a convenient concept, but like the term "Scandinavia," it too has its ambiguities.

What image does Norden produce in the eyes of the outside world? It is a composite of everything associated with the north—and the north is a virtual synonym for high latitude, darkness, and cold. The inhabitants of Norden have yet to conceive an index of "nordicity," such as that used by Louis-Edmond Hamelin to explain and project Canada. Early cosmographers who identified the lands of Northern Europe as *die mitternächtiger Länder* might have been anticipating the Swedish author Gustav Fröding, for whom the north was "the land of shadows," shadows metaphorical as well as physical. And the shadows of the north became double shadows in a poem

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by the Finn Rabbe Enckell. Midnight sun apart—and at least since Olaus Magnus produced his impressive pictorial *Carta marina* in 1539—ice, snow, and winter have surrounded the image of Norden. The terrestrial taxonomies of earlier academic geographers accentuated the negative. In the zones of habitability conceived by the British geographer H.J. Fleure, the territories occupied by the peoples of Norden ranged through regions of effort and difficulty to those of privation and hunger. The Swedish agricultural geographer Olof Jonasson strengthened the image with a map on which the boreal forest was called the "cold transition zone," while that which lay beyond it was "the cold desert death zone." The veritable Thesaurus of pejorative words associated with the countries of Norden, and reiterated in educational as well as popular books, include isolated, detached, remote, hard, harsh, desolate, austere—even brutal. For W.H. Auden, despite the stimulus that Iceland gave him, the north spelled rejection. Nor do the words for features of the landscape—fjord, fell, *bre*, skerry, scree, *ås*, geysir—help to redeem the image. They are "sharp, hard names," like those of the gods in the Norse pantheon, as Geoffrey Grigson put it. And if "borealis" does not exactly toll like a bell in the binomial system of Nordic botany, it certainly tinkles like ice, to the very limits of habitability of the fragile *Ranunculus borealis*.

At the same time, northerliness—nordicity—is a relative matter. Although all five countries are northern in European eyes, most of the inhabitants of Norden live in the more southerly parts of their realms and have their own ideas of northerliness. Norway has its Nordland, and it is not the most northerly part of the kingdom; Sweden, its Norrland, which seems to occupy more than half of the country and does not stretch as far north as North Norway. Iceland has its northern quarter, an administrative territory. Finland's historic Pohjanmaa (literally "northland," though it is geographically northwest) is its largest province, while Pohjola, the symbolic northland of Finnish folklore, is a traditional source of affliction. Nordkalotten, the high north of Finland, Norway, and Sweden, has emerged as a new collectivity.

It is only when they travel south that those who live in the north become aware of the relative impoverishment of their home territory. In the eyes of their inhabitants, the southern and metropolitan areas of Norden are regarded as anything but disagreeable. Indeed, the

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Öresund coast of Denmark (where peach trees and vines thrive) seems positively "Rivieran." Henrik Pontoppidan in his novel *Ilum Galgebakke* saw "the setting sun spreading a sheen of melted butter [over the Jutish landscape] . . . and [heard] the churches on the hills clucking like white hens." It was a Virgilian reaction to set beside the Petronian view of Bishop Grundtvig that mid-nineteenth century Copenhagen, long possessed of a distinguishable urban culture, was the very fleshpot of Norden.

THE PHYSICAL PRECONDITIONS

In their European setting, the countries of Norden share a number of geographical characteristics. The first is latitudinal location: four out of the five have a more northerly center of gravity than any other country in the world; the fifth, Denmark, makes up for its Central European location by encompassing the high latitude county of Faeroe and the subcontinent of Greenland. All five countries are thus peripheral to Europe, with Iceland (in the words of Thomas Weelkes's madrigal) for long "the end point of cosmography."

Physical isolation allowed the countries of Norden to develop independently and at the same time retarded, to a greater or lesser degree, the introduction and dissemination of cultural influences and technical developments. Isolation saved Scandinavia from the feudal wars that racked Europe in the Middle Ages, and medieval Iceland had in its Thing a near-Attic form of democratic government free from outside interference. For Swedish novelist Selma Lagerlöf, however, it was this very isolation that reduced one's chances for salvation.

Hur skall den som har sitt hem	How shall he who has his home
i Falun långt uppe i Nifelhem	in Falun far up in Nifelhem
kunne finne vägen till Betlehem?	be able to find his way to Bethlehem?

Swedish geographer Gunnar Andersson gives to latitudinal location an adjectival turn of the screw: Norden, he says, belongs to the "cold periphery of Europe." Both the westerly passage of cyclonic systems (excessive rainfall though they may bring regionally), however, and the relatively warm oceanic current known as the North Atlantic drift exert beneficent and modifying influences over substantial portions of Norden. Only the Pacific seaboard of Alaska experi-

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ences such high temperature anomalies in relation to latitude. Much of Norden, in fact, could be described as occupying an extension of the cool temperate lands into sub-Arctic and Arctic latitudes.

A second common characteristic of the five countries is their maritime setting. Although each has its own particular features, there is everywhere an intricate marriage of land and water. In relation to surface area, all five countries have coastlines that, until the age of computergraphics, defied measurement. The outer ocean, with its high salinity, strong currents, powerful tides, and rich marine life, contrasts with the virtually tideless, frequently brackish Baltic Sea—the East Sea for the peoples of Norden.

Third, all five countries were fundamentally affected by the Quaternary glaciation, and although the consequences differ from country to country, erosion, except in the case of Denmark, seems to be the chief legacy, particularly in the youthful drainage pattern. Again, except in Denmark, rapids, torrents, and waterfalls characterize Nordic watercourses. Lakes are widespread, as are swampland, bogland, and marshland. We might with justification apply "amphibious" as an adjective to most of Norden, and indeed, to most of its people, for they are wedded to coasts, lakeshores, and river valleys.

Finally, in European terms, the countries of Norden are relatively extensive, Norway, Sweden, and Finland ranking in size with Great Britain, Italy, and West Germany. Much of the surface area of Norden, however, is wasteland, and by European standards, much is uninhabitable. In Norway, not more than 3 percent of the land is cultivated; in Iceland, even less. Furthermore, much of the cultivated land in Norden is vitally dependent upon support systems. Of the 22.3 million people living in Norden, 8 million, the largest bloc, are Swedish, and 240,000, the smallest, are Icelanders.

These few characteristics the Nordic states have in common; the differences in physical geography and resources, however, outweigh their likenesses.

"Finland reposes upon a bed of granites," wrote a nineteenth century historian, referring to the so-called Fennoscandian shield, but for daily life, it is at times a Procrustean bed. There is a modest endowment of minerals, but it is the extensive coniferous forests that dominate the scene. In its tens of thousands of lakes are like numbers of islands, and those in the Finnish archipelagoes of the central Baltic outnumber the Cyclades. Finland is a country of nuances; the varied

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landscapes that are so appealing at the "micro" level become monotonously repetitious in the aggregate.

While Finland is the most continental of the five countries, Iceland—which lies nearly a thousand kilometers from the nearest part of the European mainland—is the most maritime. The average relief of the island is higher than that of any other country of Norden, and in Oraefajökull, it boasts Norden's highest mountain. In addition, Iceland is distinguished by glaciers, the largest of which is more extensive than the area covered by the rest of Europe's glaciers collectively, and volcanoes. And while forests blanket much of the rest of Norden, Iceland, except for birch scrub, is virtually treeless.

Denmark, divided between the western peninsula of Jutland and the eastern cluster of islands, is the most dissected of the five countries. It is the most low-lying, the most favored climatically, the most completely transformed by man. In flavor, it is essentially Central European, but its historical legacies (Greenland and the Faeroes in particular) tie it to the North.

Norway, with its fjords and fells overtowered by alpine peaks and domed summits, is the most visually arresting of the five countries. Seaward, there is a multiplicity of islands; eastward, across the *vidder,* the dales with their lakes are the counterparts of the fjords. A broad continental shelf, rich in oil and natural gas, skirts the coast north to the Arctic. Although Norway extends through fewer degrees of latitude than Sweden, its extended realm embraces the east-west Arctic coast of Finnmark and the Svalbard archipelago, which lies some 500 kilometers farther north.

Sweden's geographical features are similar to those of its three neighbors. In addition, it shares both a Baltic and an Atlantic seaboard, and claims some of Europe's largest lakes and some of Norden's longest rivers. Its broad southern third is a zone of transition between the deciduous woodlands indigenous to Denmark and the coniferous woodlands of Norway and Finland. Sweden's more varied geological inheritance provides it with a considerable diversity of mineral resources.

Several other environmental features should be pointed out. First, Norden spans a transitional zone across which many familiar flora and fauna pass haltingly from presence to absence. Translated into farming experience, this represents the passage from the cultivated, through the cultivable and the uncultivated, to the uncultivable, as

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the margins of tolerance of a considerable number of common West European crops are encountered.

Second, the possibilities and potentialities of the natural world are reduced from southwest to northeast, and from coast to interior. Thus, as one goes north, the generally fertile soils of the south are replaced by poor quality podsols from which critical chemicals have been leached. Since soil moisture is inclined to increase with higher latitudes and altitudes, we find a corresponding increase in various types of bogland, and a slowing down in the growth and regeneration of trees. Timber takes twice as long to renew itself in northern Sweden and Finland as in central Sweden and southern Finland. Climatic hazards also increase northward, with summer frosts a threat over about half of the surface area of Norden. With so much activity thus taking place on the margins of tolerance, there is an exaggerated sensitivity to even minor climatic changes of a secular character. In terms of the growing season, such changes automatically affect the possibilities for nourishment of both indigenous fauna and introduced species.

Sensing these environmental restraints, fauna are often migratory. Bird migrations of vast size move northward to feed on the aquatic foodstuffs and the explosion of insects that characterize summer in the high latitudes. Seven hundred thousand reindeer, wild as well as domesticated, migrate seasonally from one pasture to another. The sea throbs to immense migrations of fish, some of which have inexplicably shifted the direction of their movements through the centuries. The late winter concentration of cod in Ofoten fjord, the spring flush of herring off Möre and Romsdal, the summer climax of cod off the Arctic coast of Norway, and the seasonal herring and cod movements around the coast of Iceland are phenomena for which there is no simple or single explanation.

The physical environment induces human responses both conscious and unconscious; its phenomena provoke human curiosity. The former are expressed in the feelings that the peoples of Norden have for their lands: the latter, in the search for scientific explanations of the features of their landscapes.

A FEELING FOR THE LAND

In a monograph from the early 1920s, a Finnish scientist, J.G. Granö, conceived a geography of the senses. Places are sensed subjec-

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tively as well as being identified objectively. Sound, smell, and touch are as relevant to the appreciation of place as is sight, and are rooted in an "earth magic" that stands in contrast to the superficial features of civilization. They belong to time as well as to place; above all, to time as expressed in seasonality.

No feature of seasonality is more important to the peoples of Norden than variations in the character and duration of light and darkness. The outside world associates their lands with the midnight sun, but what are much more characteristic of the greater part of Norden are the long light nights of summer. To the contrastingly short period of daylight at the winter equinox, a variety of physical ills and mental consequences have been ascribed—on very slender scientific evidence, it might be said. It speaks volumes for changing attitudes that travel agencies can now advertise the time of midwinter darkness (eloquently termed *kaamosaika* in Finnish) as a complementary experience to that of the midnight sun. The months with the shortest days are not necessarily the most disagreeable. November—for Finns, *Marraskuu,* the month of death—is much more unpleasant than high winter, when the blanket of snow and ice gives a measure of reflected illumination. And March, which is often the coldest month, is radiantly bright with the returning sun. *Fiat lux* might be an appropriate motto for much of Norden. "Midwinter darkness has taught him to love light," wrote the historian Zachris Topelius of the Finn. Björnstjerne Björnson, in urging Norwegians to "turn to light the tumbling torrent," was anticipating what America's Henry Adams was soon to witness as a liberating reality in northern Scandinavia—"the lights of an electro-magnetic civilization." The Sjaellanders of the Bronze Age bequeathed to Norden the first symbol of light in their cult chariot of the sun; in *Ghosts,* Ibsen gave to Oswald Alving the sun as the ultimate metaphor.

The annual rhythm of darkness and light is accompanied by one of cold and warmth. Low temperatures are a distinguishing feature of Norden, and where they are accompanied by maritime influences, humidity gives to them a chilling edge. The pluviosity of Atlantic Scandinavia can depress, but the duration of ice and snow can stultify. For the Swedish historian E.G. Geijer, winter was the most characteristic feature of his home country. "We are born for the winter," wrote the Finn Toivo Pekkanen. Winter was the closed season in former times; over most of Norden, everything was shut up or shut

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in. And, if in former times, ice and snow on the face of the land liberated movement through ski and runner, they closed the sea lanes of the inner Baltic, and in hard winters, the entire East Sea. Landlocked sea became sealocked land. On occasion, Atlantic influences take precedence over continental ones, and Norden experiences a "maritime winter"; the anticipated rhythm of life may then suffer disorganization. Certainly, for the forester, a "good" winter is one with ample snow cover.

With their present good nourishment, the peoples of Norden have more than enough surplus energy to embrace winter as a season of recreation. In the old days, the hyperboreans, unwittingly emulating the torpor of bear and hedgehog, stayed indoors to conserve heat. Small wonder that Len Deighton, writing from the midwinter shores of the Gulf of Finland, declared that "cold is claustrophobic." A generation before Henry Adams coined the aphorism "Summer teaches, winter rests," Zachris Topelius was impressing a pedagogic antithesis between the wintertime of indoor learning and the summertime of outdoor doing. Norden in general lacks the extended equinoxal seasons of Western Europe: spring is reluctant to arrive; autumn, except in the tundra, is rather lacklustre.

In mainland Norden, the most extensive feature is the boreal forest. It produces its own behavioral responses, and not surprisingly, they are strongest in Sweden, Finland, and Norway. In his lecture notes, Topelius wrote that "the sight of a spruce or birch after the long sojourn among chestnuts and olives can move a man to tears." Uncannily echoing him, Harry Martinson considered Swedes to be "sprucewood people," for whom no olive groves could meet their spiritual needs. His compatriot Wilhelm Moberg wrote of the sense of security and freedom that he felt in the forest, while the Finnish statesman J.V. Snellman regarded the forest as a fine training ground for life. Naturally, it had to be the right kind of forest. The warped growth of trees induced by wind, waterlogging, and snow pressures was, for determinists such as the Norwegian Jonas Lie, matched by the deformities, both physical and mental, suffered by those who lived among them. Contorted pines, bearded and stag-headed, no less than strangely weathered rocks, have undoubtedly stimulated some of the animistic beliefs that have moved the Lapps, while Norwegian romantic artists have created out of similar features a whole new population of grotesques.

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Sensations born of olfactory and sonic geographies also announce the homeland to the inhabitants of Norden. The scent of thousands of square kilometers of birch trees coaxed into leaf by daytime heat and shocked by cold June nights, or of conifers in hot August, is intensified in the nostrils after the sauna. The powerful odor of the fish-meal factory and the pervasive smell of sulphate plants betoken money; the acrid smoke of forest fires, its loss. The vapors of Iceland's warm springs emerge sulphurously from Reykjavik's hot-water systems. The smells of home may be those of the winter huddle of animals in the byre, of the fermentation of silage prevailing over the sweet scent of hay, of summer dill, and of autumn fungi. Even differences in the tax systems between the countries of Norden can give rise to nationally evocative smells, not least the cigar smoke of Denmark's urban places.

The sonic landscape is no less intimate and personal—the slapping and lapping of water, the flutings of thin ice, the reverberations beneath its yard-thick counterpart, the squeakings of snow under the boot, wind in all its manifestations, mosquitoes singing above bogland, bees humming on the heaths, the bleat of many sheep in Iceland, cowbells in Norway, seafowl crying from their skerry breeding grounds or from the echoing bird cliffs of the Faeroes. The macrosounds have different expressions from place to place: the intermittent thunder of rock fall, the crack of the glacier calving, the roar of waves along Jutland's iron west coast. And, in total contrast, there are the celestial silences that Carolus Linnaeus remarked on his Lappland journey.

Out of a thousand such phenomena are created the feeling for place—George Steiner's "interanimation" between people and the land they occupy—that is the inheritance of those who live in the various parts of Norden.

A SEARCH FOR EXPLANATIONS

The peoples of Norden, living close to the earth, developed an early curiosity about the features and functioning of the natural world that affected their lives and livelihood. But it was the mood of the Enlightenment that generated fuller and wider inquiry into what an eighteenth century Danish cleric called "the laboratory of nature."

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The group of natural scientists that emerged was small in number, but it made an impact in Europe. In the wake of Linnaeus, two generations of observers set about gathering factual information, increasingly heeding the invocation of his *Botanical Philosophy* that "every note should be a product of number, of form, of proportion, of situation." They included physicists, chemists, meteorologists (above all Anders Celsius), and mineralogists enough to constitute a near Golden Age. And while environmental constraints gave a practical and applied emphasis to their work, theorists were also to hand to further intellectual discussion.

At the same time, the central administrations began to collect more detailed information for fiscal purposes. Resources, especially the purpose for which land was used, were measured in order that they could be more effectively taxed. Heads had to be counted, not only to estimate the number of mouths to be fed on Europe's famine fringe, but also to assess potential military recruitment. In *Tabellverket*, Sweden/Finland's mid-eighteenth century population tables, are rooted Europe's modern censuses, while the *pro formas* collected by parish priests throughout the realm were the ancestors of today's data banks.

It is natural that the particular features of the land and its resources should have guided, where they have not actually determined, the course of Norden's scientific interests. Few topics generated livelier debate among its natural scientists at the time of the Enlightenment than the changing level of the Baltic Sea. The intellectual conflicts between the volcanists and neptunists over this very practical phenomenon yielded in turn to the more sober empiricism of nineteenth century geologists, and then to contemporary speculation by geophysicists. In the course of time, ideas conceived in similar environments were picked up and developed, none more stimulating for the natural scientists of Norden than the glacial theories originated by Louis Agassiz in North America. The extension and refinement of glaciological studies has yielded fascinating perspectives in the evolution of the world of Norden.

There is inevitably an element of adventure and romance in all high-latitude forays. It is illustrated by A.E. Nordenskiold's circumnavigation of the Old World by way of the North-East Passage on the research ship *Vega*, and by the first fully scientific expedition conducted into the Arctic basin on Fridtjof Nansen's *Fram*. Experi-

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ences in the Arctic directed attention to the Antarctic, where Roald Amundsen left his mark and provided a basis for Norwegian territorial claims. The one hundredth anniversary of the *Vega* voyage was celebrated by a multidisciplinary investigation of the Arctic on the icebreaker *Ymer*.

As the pioneering work of privately supported individuals yielded to teamwork based on public finance, activity became increasingly institutionalized. Norway's high-latitude interests were channelled into *Norges Polar Institutt,* while Denmark initiated a formal geological survey of Greenland. Seagoing bred oceanography and related research institutes in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. Norway's fishing interests resulted in the establishment of a fisheries research institute in Bergen, which was soon to concern itself with conservation, and inevitably with the politicization of activity in the extension of territorial waters. Simultaneously, the sensitivity of mariners to weather conditions directed attention to forecasting for practical purposes, but also yielded theories such as Bjerknes's model of cyclonic origins. A nice example of determinism can be linked to the *Aurora borealis*. The intensity of its occurrence in North Norway encouraged the establishment of a pioneering institute for its study in Tromsö, an institute that was to form one of the bases for the establishment of the world's northernmost university. In Sweden and Finland, the boreal forest has directed attention to the manifold problems of silviculture, with the result that no country in the world has a more thorough understanding of forest resources. At the same time, growing awareness of secular climatic changes as they are reflected in the changing distributions of plants and animals has encouraged a concern for the history of climate. Iceland, with its small population and limited financial resources, is unable to engage in the luxury of the varied research institutes that its physical geography merits, but it is increasingly the focus of scientists at the international level.

While the presence of particular natural features explains much of the specialized research of Norden's physical scientists, the emergence of the area as a laboratory for social scientists is more fortuitous. It could be argued that the widespread occurrence of visually distinctive archaeological remains in the Danish and South Swedish landscapes bred a curiosity that eventually yielded C.J. Thomsen's first formal classification of Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages. It could be argued, too, that the isolation imposed by obstructive forests and

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swamps favored the persistence of folk poetry and customs among the widely dispersed population, so that the Finns were eventually able to assemble a collection of folkloristic materials quantitatively inferior to none and to develop unique methodologies for their treatment. A parallel argument, citing physical distance, could be employed to explain the preservation and reappraisal of the old Scandinavian legacy of the Faeroe Islands. In contrast, the high points of Nordic history, in the context of the European, appear to owe more to people than to place, and to social organization that was relatively superior to that of neighboring lands. The Viking episode may have been partly a response to the physical pressures of the narrow home base; its impact, however, would have been less were it not for the organizational forms developed by the Norsemen. And, how is it possible to explain, except in terms of organizational effectiveness, Sweden's seventeenth century eminence? Norden's East Sea at the time of Gustavus Adolphus awaits a Fernand Braudel to marry geographical and historical explanation.

At a lower level, Norden's distinctive social institutions also owe more to people than to place. There is no particular physical reason why the principles of the Rochdale pioneers should have been picked up by Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes within not much more than a decade of their conception, and converted into the distinctive rural cooperatives. The heathlands of Jutland can scarcely help to provide an explanation why the people of Hjedding established the first Danish cooperative dairy. And, when environmentalists get down to business, they will have to reconcile the fact that Sweden's avowedly barren province of Småland contributed more heavily to the stream of emigrants than most parts of the country, at the same time as theorists attribute to the challenge of its physical constraints a greater degree of inventiveness and initiative than in any other part of their country.

Be such facts as they may, there is no denying that in contemporary Norden, the social scientist can work with greater ease and effectiveness than in most parts of the world, owing to the social structures of the five countries, the accessibility of statistical materials, the lower thresholds of confidentiality, positive attitude of bureaucrats toward such inquiries, and the fact that—for better or for worse—the peoples of Norden are conditioned to investigations. In addition, the academic fraternity there generally has been more closely associ-

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ated with political and economic processes than in most parts of the world. Finally, in a particular geographical sense, the countries of Norden provide laboratories for social investigation. The large numbers of island communities and remote settlements can be isolated for analysis, and many offer studies in survival in their own right, with Iceland a synthesis—perhaps an apotheosis—of all. In fact, Iceland's experiences in creating and sustaining an independent state of 240,000 inhabitants are relevant to all small and aspiring nations.

THE TECHNICAL PRECIPITANTS

The physical preconditions, the feeling for the land, and the search for explanations that both engendered are complemented by technical precipitants that in time and place have modified the concepts of wealth and poverty, economy and society, in the world of Norden. History provides examples aplenty which show that Norden's geographical setting has not always been regarded as a misfortune. It may be exemplified first by the work of the Ålandic archaeologist Matts Drejer, who, pondering the concentration of burial mounds and the rich prehistoric harvest of seals and seal oil of his home archipelago, has identified it as "the Middle East" of prehistoric Northern Europe. Second, if its ninety-two historic churches, its monastic ruins, and its impressive walled city of Visby speak for Gotland, limitation is scarcely a word to be applied in the context of its medieval experience. Third, the steady colonization of the crown lands in eighteenth century Sweden/Finland carried pioneers into seemingly marginal territory at a time when the climatic situation was less favorable than it is today. Yet, as reflected in the diary of one of the settlers in Norrland's parish of Wilhelmina, the *nybyggare* rejoiced in the generous forest grazings, in the rich hunting and fishing, in the abundance of timber for building and fuel, such that they regarded the associated land-breaking as "a sport and an article of faith." Indeed, it was an illustration of what Philip Larkin has called "the audacious, purifying, elemental move" of the migrant.

The immediate preindustrial period, described by the Swedish historian Gunnar Utterström as the climax of the *ancien régime,* offers other illustrations. Throughout Norden, the independent *bonde*—with his land and family household as the unit of production, engaged in a near-subsistence operation rather than in reinvestment of

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his profit—pressed into service every conceivable resource. The situation in Norway's fjordland, described in detail by the nineteenth century British topographer Samuel Laing, was that every nook and cranny amenable to spade and hoe was cultivated, while *saeter* above *saeter* was sought, literally to the giddy limits. Simultaneously, the settlement and utilization of land in the Baltic archipelagoes was extended to the outermost skerries. The islander, as described by Strindberg in *Skärkarlsliv* and *Hemsöboarna*, was a generalist in his activities, and the totality of his diverse resources, limited though each might be, provided a tolerable reward. His was a good life, compared with those led in many parts of Sweden or Finland. Katrina, heroine of one of Sally Salminen's novels, found the Åland archipelago a veritable garden of Eden by comparison with life in North Finland. It is ironical that today, in order to prevent their desertion and to sustain the remaining inhabitants, all of these territories are subsidized, and some are near to the top in the support systems of their countries.

There have been four principal and overlapping stages in the conversion of the countries of Norden, from territories dominated by largely self-sufficient countryfolk living in a reservoir of raw materials destined for sale to Western Europe, to a group of urbanized and industrialized states with an advanced technology.

The first stage was a slow one, and it was tied to the revolution in transport, which, by easing the costs of movement, led to a revaluation of many resources and the beginning of greater physical security. The shortage of foodstuffs, which in the past had brought famine—or the threat of it—at regular intervals over much of Norden, could be corrected. At the same time, the multiplication of external contacts with Western Europe made the peoples of Norden conscious of the time lag in their development. They were already fully aware of the imbalance in the constituents of production: land (which was abundant, even if much of it had little or no productive value); labor (which was largely unskilled and limited in its availability); capital (which was totally inadequate); and entrepreneurship (which was in short supply and hampered by restrictive *privilegia*). With the revaluation of resources, the forest farmers, for example, found themselves in possession of a new capital source. But partly because of the time lag in development and of transport changes themselves, large-scale emigration took place before the second stage was under way.

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The second stage, the industrialization of the four countries of mainland Norden, was comparatively swift, though events were not parallel from country to country. In the third stage, the range of products derived from the limited variety of raw materials was extended, giving a nice example of Herbert Spencer's development from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. The final stage, the familiar postindustrial phase, in which the tertiary and quaternary sectors in the employment structure take precedence—has seen the countries of Norden become sources of technological expertise in their own right.

By comparison with most countries, and expressed in terms of cost-benefit, the countries of Norden have gained disproportionately from technical change, principally because of the manifold ways in which technology has eased the circumstances of the physical environment. Naturally, the extent to which limiting factors can be overcome is very variable. Most commonly, and at a price, they are simply pushed away from the foreground. Nevertheless, an unquantifiable mental stimulus has grown out of the success in dealing with environmental constraints, a success inseparable from organizational acumen.

In no economic area has the success been more remarkable than in agriculture, where it has been achieved within rural structures that were initially very different from country to country. Thus, in Norway, village farms were typical, and the *tun* farm, usually a family or extended-family holding, was the distinctive feature. Its associated system of strip-holdings was largely reorganized in the late nineteenth century. In Denmark, the open field system, with nucleated villages or hamlets coupled with extensive semifeudal estates, was broken up by late eighteenth century land reforms. Thus the isolated farmstead, the norm in Iceland and Norway, is relatively new in Denmark. In the older, settled parts of Sweden and Finland, land reorganization initiated in the eighteenth century also promoted dispersal of rural settlement. But the broadening of the base of land ownership, which in Denmark dates from the decade of the French Revolution, was delayed in Finland until the twentieth century.

It is difficult to realize that, until within living memory, poverty marked much of the countryside of Norden. The romantic country scene, as depicted by artists such as J.R. Eckersberg in Denmark or I.C. Dahl in Norway, has to be complemented by reference to C.J.L.

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Almquist's essay on poverty in Sweden (1835) and by the mid-nineteenth century agrarian reports written by Eilert Sundt, Norway's first sociologist. Overpopulation and undernourishment were widespread. In Sweden and Finland in particular, a rural proletariat of small tenant farmers and day laborers emerged, whose life and attitudes were to yield political protest and were to be enshrined in a powerful literature of realism.

Today, the farming structure of the countries of Norden is dominated absolutely by owner-operators, though they are frequently faced with the problem of uneconomically small properties. The reforms that widened land ownership also rejuvenated the feeling for the land, so that the independent *bonde* (more accurately described as yeoman farmer than as peasant) with his family farm has become even more strongly the symbol of rural solidarity.

The countries of Norden may still be only self-sufficient in a limited number of foodstuffs, but biological, technological, and managerial efforts have provided a new flexibility and a new security in their production. Disease-resistant and quicker ripening seeds, improved rotations, artificial fertilizers, and more effective drainage systems have boosted crop yields. Stock has been improved in variety and quality. Mechanization has had a greater significance for field operations than in more southerly climates because of the short cultivation season. Days of machine labor have replaced weeks of human labor, and the risks of harvesting have been reduced. But because the small farm dominates, equipment—from harvesting machines and tractors to milking rooms—has had to be scaled down to the size of the holding and the means of the farmer. Broadly based land ownership is not without problems of fragmentation, often born of inheritance. The multiplication of uneconomic holdings has had to be checked by legislative action.

Transport is another area that has been profoundly affected by technology. Mechanical earthmovers can speed the preparation of highways, railbeds, and runways. Improved excavators can tunnel through mountains and provide routes secure against rockfall and avalanche. Air transport—the *Daedalus hyperboreus* of Emmanuel Swedenborg come to life—has brought greater benefits to the countries of Norden than to most parts of Europe. It has lifted movement above terrestrial obstructions and, if need be, can provide emergency services for the widely dispersed high-latitude communities.

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The challenge of ice and snow can also be faced. Snow clearance for the maintenance of wheeled traffic has been eased, but the annual battle with winter ice, although variable in its intensity, remains critical nationally and regionally. Finland is the most afflicted country, with most of its coast beleaguered by ice during several months in most winters. Bothnian Sweden has similar experiences. In hard winters, the entire Baltic may be affected, including the Danish Sound and Belts. Historically, shipping deserted the Baltic Sea in winter (so, too, the North Atlantic, leaving Iceland bereft of winter communication). It is little more than a century since the first tentative efforts to maintain steamship communication between Sweden and Finland throughout the year were made. Today, ice-strengthened ships, advised by elaborate ice-forecasting methods and supported by a fleet of icebreakers, maintain uninterrupted communication from southern and southwestern Finnish ports. It would be technically possible to maintain access to all Finnish ports in an average winter, but the costs would outweigh the benefits. On land, as well as at sea, the extra cost of maintaining winter communications is the equivalent of an appreciable tax levied by geography, and in addition, the costs of heating and insulation, insurance and clothing, must be figured in. Yet some indirect compensation is derived, since both capital and consumer goods produced in response to winter have found export markets. Above all, Finland, within the span of a generation, has capitalized on a geographical contingency by becoming the world's largest producer of icebreakers. The new Arctic orientation that this represents is tied first and foremost to the high-latitude needs of its eastern neighbor.

Heat and light are relatively more important in high latitudes than elsewhere, and fuel is therefore critical. All of the countries of Norden have been in the past or are now fully conscious of their deficiencies. When eighteenth century Sweden was Europe's principal source of bar iron, acute shortages of charcoal became evident in its south-central smelting areas. Absence of significant good quality coal deposits restricted, where it did not delay, nineteenth century industrialization. Before the Second World War, Norden imported millions of tons of coal annually from Western Europe. The introduction of hydroelectric power changed the situation regionally for two generations. But water power is unevenly distributed among the countries of Norden; Iceland has large undeveloped sites as well as sources of

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geothermal energy equaled in few parts of the world. Norway is generously supplied with water power. Sweden's resources, almost fully developed, are insufficient; Denmark's are totally inadequate. Only a third of Finland's energy needs are met from domestic sources. Since the Second World War, all the countries of Norden have become increasingly dependent upon imported fuel oil. Today, two thirds of the energy used in Norden comes from oil. In anticipation of an energy shortage, Sweden initiated a program of thermonuclear production. Finland followed suit, and is also linked to the gas pipeline system of the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the production of North Sea oil and natural gas has become a reality, with Norway emerging as Europe's best endowed state. For the time being, however, most of Norden still looks to sources of oil supply beyond Europe. Fuel oil is a sensitive resource not only because of transportation and industrial and domestic needs, but because in all of the countries except Iceland, refining has become an important activity, with petrochemical production central to their industrial structures. Rationalization in energy production and consumption has aroused an almost pathological concern in Norden.

Deficiencies are also being encountered in other areas of the economy where Norden believed itself to be well supplied. The generous resources of the sea, for example, that have supported Iceland and Norway, and to a lesser extent Denmark and Sweden, are dwindling; for Iceland, the decline threatens to be catastrophic. Disturbance of the equilibrium in fish stocks is usually attributed to overfishing at the international level, and there is corresponding sensitivity about the extent of territorial waters. Meanwhile, whaling, in which Norway once played an international role, is on the edge of disappearing as an economic pursuit. Softwood timber remains abundant in Finland, Norway, and Sweden, but while there is room to maneuver in cutting programs, there is a need for improvement in forest management.

Limitation is also a word that is regularly applied to the markets of Norden. The domestic markets of each country impose limits on the size and type of industrial concerns. The success of large-scale plants is often dependent upon adequate external markets. Thus, against the background of their long experience in seagoing, all the Nordic countries have built up significant merchant marines, which were at first engaged in domestic transport but subsquently became interna-

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tional carriers. Norway established a world reputation in this area, and to meet a projected exponential expansion in the demand for oil, expanded its fleet of tankers. As a result, it has suffered the full impact of world depression, as have most of Norden's large shipyards.

THE PERSISTENCE OF PARADOX

The peoples of Norden are well aware that their countries are shaped by the paradoxes born of their geography—or written by men into it. Although technology has relieved some of the physical constraints of life and activity in Norden, it has revealed others. Within living memory, the five countries have been transformed, to a greater or lesser degree, from lands of deprivation—in comparison with other European countries—to territories of affluence. Paradoxes spring from this experience.

First, there remain within these privileged lands regions that are underprivileged. Rich societies, no less than poor, have their leading and lagging areas, and the gap widens between those where wealth and population are concentrated and those where population is relatively scanty and development retarded. The weaker areas are almost invariably rural. Rural deprivation is often not easily discernible, but it shows up statistically in farm abandonment, unemployment, underemployment, migration, a lower level of services, and a poorer health record. And, while global setting and geography are among the factors that account for the location of a country's underprivileged areas, poverty has been variable in its incidence from place to place through time. Proverbially poor heathlands, such as those that bred Jutland's poets and philosophers, those exemplified in the *Heathland Cobblers* of the Finnish novelist Alexis Kivi, and even those that persisted as islands of retarded development in Sweden's otherwise prosperous and progressive Skåne, have been lifted out of their penury by technical change, while other territories now suffer attrition. Thus, in the days of would-be self-sufficiency, distance from the metropolitan areas or from external markets was only a limited constraint. Peripherality now spells deprivation, and the situation is only partially redressed when remote territories, such as Norrbotten with its iron ore, or Spitzbergen with its coal, can exploit commercially valuable resources. Deprivation tends to breed human tensions, to foster centrifugal tendencies, and to generate radical politics.

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Norden's central governments try continuously to correct regional imbalances by devising robust programs of decentralization and by providing compensatory devices. All of the four mainland countries have created elaborate mechanisms to offset the disadvantages of those who live in their less-favored areas. Unfortunately, the policies they apply are sometimes in conflict with one another; sometimes in fact they generate new problems. Thus, schemes that promote industry are frequently concerned more with increasing production than (to put it in a positively negative way) with reducing employment contraction. Furthermore, although investment in certain industries, such as softwood processing, usually boosts employment significantly, a substantial part of the work force may thereby be at the mercy of a fluctuating international market, if that is where most of their products are sold. The result may be the addition of another of those one-industry or one-company towns to the urban system, and though they are undoubtedly agreeable communities when the economy is buoyant, a decline in international trade may plunge their inhabitants into despair.

Other paradoxes spring from policies designed to assist sectoral interests. Throughout Norden, for example, there is a strong agricultural lobby and, with the exception of Denmark, there are generous systems of support for farmers. Generally speaking—and in the Jeffersonian phrase—governments "court the interests of the husbandman," and the geographical distribution of various agricultural activities is strongly influenced by the courtship. The result of direct and indirect subsidies has been an accumulation of surplus farm products, most pronounced in the dairy industry, but including egg and pork products as well. Milk, butter, and cheese surpluses have been especially evident in Sweden and Finland. Plenitude produces penalties; accordingly, measures have been taken to reduce dairy herds. The slaughter of tens of thousands of dairy cattle has been accompanied by payments to farmers in Sweden and Finland to withdraw from cultivation land that is not needed for fodder production. But there is an even more disturbing fact: investment in the more climatically favored and market-oriented areas yields higher returns than elsewhere. Theoretically, then, it would pay to encourage even more intensive husbandry on more limited areas, and to withdraw yet more land from the plough. In other words, improvement of land of second- and third-class quality in the south (of Norway, Finland, and

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Sweden) might be a better investment than continued cultivation of the best quality land in the north. But, of course, pursuit of such a policy would ignore the unquantifiable social consequences.

At the same time that affluence has succeeded deprivation, new demographic patterns have emerged. The high birth rates generally associated with rural communities have fallen, and although there are regional differences in mortality (in some parts of the high north, 20 percent greater than in the more favored south), longevity characterizes Norden at large. Within three generations, problems associated with undernourishment have been succeeded by those of overconsumption; problems of physical hygiene, by those of mental hygiene. Once, medical scientists plotted the incidence of tuberculosis, and patients were removed from often unhygienic homes to sanatoria that were architectural monuments and where hygiene was a fetish. The disease has withered away; the monuments remain.

Demographic distributions also reflect the highly selective character of internal migration. Movement to urban areas, especially by the younger members of the community, has continued apace. Migration is not always to the major metropolitan districts, some of which have ceased to grow significantly, but it is almost invariably away from the more remote, stagnating areas. At the same time as the numbers of their inhabitants are decreasing, the average age of the population in many peripheral areas of Norden is increasing. Thus many rural communities possess smaller, older populations, at a time when all signs point to large ones as the most efficient unit for the provision of social services. The private sector is affected similarly. The closure of thousands of cooperative stores throughout the northern half of Norden is compensated—in theory, at least—by the provision of mobile shops (to match the mobile medical, dental, library, and banking services) and by the near-ubiquity of private transport. But again, there are social considerations beyond the economic.

While one stream of migrants moves from country to town, another moves seasonally from town to countryside. It is a phenomenon more widespread in mainland Norden than in most parts of Europe, and it is inseparable from the wealth that permits second (and, sometimes, third) homes. In Norway, where there are 300,000 second homes, it is estimated that between seven and ten thousand are added annually. Sweden, Denmark, and Finland show a similar growth rate. With the exception of Denmark, the frequency of second homes

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is directly related to the large surface area per capita available. Rights of access to the land also differ from what is prevalent in most parts of Europe. These rights are rooted in the old *allemansrätt,* a kind of common law in evidence most often in Sweden, and quite different from the codified (almost Roman-type) law, which seems to have urban roots. The established summer "transhumance" is increasingly complemented by migration for participation in winter sports. A second home almost invariably calls for possession of a car or a boat, or both. There are a quarter of a million leisure boats in Norway, perhaps one for every two families, and the numbers are proportionately high in the other Nordic countries.

Having a second home has its ironies. Many areas appear to be more densely populated than they in fact are; the (often) hard-won material amenities of the urban apartment are exchanged for the debatable comforts of the summer residence. The summer home, furthermore, implies the rigorous life of the puritan—even the hermit. But, remembering that the rural roots of most families are not far from the surface, it allows them to experience vicariously the lives of their forefathers and to escape from urban discipline—for, although the great majority of Scandinavians are town-dwellers, rarely is there a strong sense of an urban culture. There is irony, too, in the fact that the second home is frequently an abandoned school, a deserted farmhouse, or a former farm building; and if new, it may be located on land that it no longer pays to farm. In an almost historical reversion, a waterside setting is normally the favorite. Yet lakeshore concentrations in particular bring other problems. It is possible to rail against industrial pollution, especially when it is in the form of acid rain emanating from foreign lands, yet at the same time ignore sanitation problems on one's doorstep. Summer homes are subjected to increasing restrictions because of their increasing numbers. New freedoms won by new technologies necessitate new restraints—and new Leviathans emerge all too easily to impose them.

INESCAPABLE GEOGRAPHY

As French historian Fernand Braudel reminds us, "All human relations are necessarily reduced to the space . . . they occupy." For most people, the bounded space of the nation-state is the territory of great-

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est significance. Each state embraces a particular combination of physical circumstances and opportunities; each displays what Michel Foucault has called a succession of "sedimental significations"; and each lives in an equilibrium of tensions inseparable from them. At the purely physical level throughout Norden, it might appear that a Nietzschean "iron hand of necessity" controls the destiny of its inhabitants. Certainly, the "dice box of chance" has shaken with less generous effect there than in most other parts of Europe. But, always assuming that people are able and willing to pay the appropriate price, it may be an iron hand in a velvet glove.

In his lectures to students in Helsinki in 1867, Zachris Topelius summed up the three keys to history: geographical position, natural conditions, and the ability of people to use them. That the peoples of Norden have utilized the resources of their countries to increase substantially the material comfort of their lives is a measure of their ability to shift the incidence of physical circumstances. Their accomplishments lend support to those schools of thought which, invoking a stimulus-response model, argue that hardship fosters ingenuity and enterprise—nationally, locally, personally. It is not easy to deny that for at least some parts of Norden, and for at least some periods in history, the Toynbean thesis has validity. H.R. Mill, sometime secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, writing to Fridtjof Nansen at the end of the last century, conceived of Norway as "serving in turn to sting life into action and to drive thought to somber introspection." He might also have associated such looking inward with the Protestant ethic, or more precisely, the Lutheran version of it.

Certainly, Norden provides substantial evidence to support the association, noted by Weber, between Protestantism and the rise of capitalism. The comparable thesis that R.H. Tawney applied to New England could be repeated *mutatis mutandi* for the colonial settlements of the backwoods of Finland, Norway, and Sweden. Ascetism was a necessary quality in the *bonde,* who was the backbone of society in Norden. To wrest a little Eden from the wilderness was more than an assertion of individuality, for to husband its resources was to heed the parable of the talents. It was, moreover, an exercise that throughout most of the history of Norden chimed with the philosophy of the state as well as with that of the church. "Richness lies in a certain penury," declared Jean Cocteau. Nature frequently gives of its best near to the margins of tolerance; man, when he labors under

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a certain pressure—and in Norden, it is often pressure along those margins of tolerance. "As with the Spartans, so with the Finns," wrote a bureaucrat in 1802. "To hunger a little is the best spur."

Such philosophical considerations defy any form of measurement or testing. So, too, do those rooted in the conditions of political geography. The very word *Geopolitik* and the theories concerning the political geography of Norden were conceived by Rudolf Kjellen in Sweden during the early years of the twentieth century. He believed that with their relative decline in status, the countries of Norden were held in balance between the land powers of Russia and Germany and the sea powers of Britain and the United States: the military authority of the powers on the Baltic front complementing the commercial authority of those on the Atlantic. The thesis fits the map, but tends to underestimate the commercial authority of Germany. Echoes of the Hanse are still evident, from Bergen in the west to (now Russian) Vyborg in the east. The influence of German commercial education is reflected in Norden's *handelshögskolar*. West Germany's positive balance of trade with Norden continues a long-standing tradition. Not least, the nineteenth century romanticism that took such hold on the countries owes much to German influences. As with men, so with states: according to George Steiner, "Space is mapped by what lies outside; it derives its coherence ... from the pressure of the external."

Certainly, one response to such pressure has been the Nordic countries' search for distinctive features in their ethnographies and the sharpened projection of their national images, by referring back to those "ruins, shadows and antiquities," literal and metaphorical, that Hawthorne believed distinguished the Old World from the New. By comparison with most of Europe, Norden has few major antiquities because timber used in building was subject to fire and decay, stone was expensive to hew, and both labor and wealth were limited. Neither Rome nor feudal chivalry inspired the creation of lasting monuments in Norden as they did in Southern Europe. Nor, for that matter, did Byzantium, though Finland has been continuously conscious of the influence of its heirs. Accordingly, where antiquities do exist, the peoples of Norden (most of whom inhabit new apartments and dwellings built since the Second World War) take good care of them. An abundance of vernacular remains began to be rescued just at the time that industrial and urban transformation threatened their

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disappearance. In Stockholm, the folk museum of Skansen provides the model accommodation. Norwegian antiquarians protected the remaining stave churches from replacement by master builders' dreams in the neo-Gothic mode. In Jutland, an entire collection of buildings from the old part of Aarhus was removed to form a unique museum in *den gamle By* (the Old Town). Nor must it be forgotten that, although the people of Norden may not be zealous churchgoers, their ecclesiastical buildings, which are maintained by the state, are the envy of many another country.

Among the other symbols of ethnicity that have been given a new distinctiveness, none is more important than language. The printed language is an inescapable feature of the human landscape, and in each of the five countries, it has its unique expression. In Finland, inscriptions are in two languages—and the shades of a third still haunt earlier street signs. Old Norse elements persist in the alphabet employed in Iceland and the Faeroes. The toponymy of Norway seems unable to decide which form to take—and it changes in time as well as in space. To the other citizens of Norden, Danish looks more familiar than it sounds. And, everywhere in Norden, privately as well as publicly, that symbol of the territorial imperative, the flag, is flown with a flourish. Nor are five flags enough, since Åland and the Faeroes fly their own. The flag appears to express some deep-seated compensatory mechanism, one that may be at work as well among the younger states of the Nordic community as they write and rewrite their history to create a past worthy of their present, or as they publicize the shape and content of their sovereign territories in national atlases, which were pioneered by a politically minded Finland in 1899.

While the sharpening of the national image assists the individual states in their extra-Nordic relations, it may lead to inter-Nordic tensions, for each country has its minority groups, most living in circumstances far different geographically from the majority of its citizens. For Greenland's 50,000 Eskimos, paternalism is no longer enough. Greenlanders have come of age sufficiently to claim a measure of autonomy and to make their independent voice heard in the counsels of Norden. The 40,000 Faeroe Islanders, as with the Ålanders (who have constitutional autonomy within Finland), also call increasingly for self-determination. The most distinctive minority group, the *Samer* (or Lapps, as the outside world has always called them), num-

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ber 40,000, most living in Norway and Sweden, and only a minority concerned with reindeer husbandry. Their traditional territories, subject to intrusion for mining, forestry, energy production, transport purposes, and recreational activity, are increasingly the subject of public debate. In such centers as Karasjokk and Kautokeino, facilities for education in the Lappish language are available, and features of the Lapp cultures are fostered. Surprisingly, Finland's Lappish minority is numerically smaller than its gypsies, a colorful group that lives around the fringes of society. In some respects, Sweden's minority problems are the most complicated. In addition to the postwar refugees from the Baltic states (who are being slowly assimilated) and the diverse Mediterranean and Asian peoples (who responded to the calls for labor during the high noon of prosperity), there are the Finns, the greatest concentration of whom are found in "many-tongued Norrbotten," where they are partly indigenous and partly immigrant. They are an active group, and have called for the use of Finnish as a language of instruction in the schoolroom. Across the border, in Norwegian Finnmark (Ruija, to the Finns), the ethnographic sensitivity that marked the interwar years has largely disappeared.

Ethnic tensions tend to be most frequent where centrifugal forces are strongest. Lappland, long the subject of dispute between Danes, Swedes, and Russians, used to loom large on the map of northern Scandinavia, although it never had an agreed-upon political outline. Norway, Sweden, and Finland now identify their "high north" as Nordkalotten, though it, too, lacks a precise political shape. It is ironical that in Nordkalotten, where cooperation between three of the countries of Norden might be profitably increased and where population is sparsest, ethnographic differences should be so strongly expressed.

All five countries of Norden realize that, as small powers, they must practice different ways of constructing their systems and conducting their affairs from those pursued by larger powers. Experience also suggests that there is an advantage to be gained in showing a common face to the world and in reducing friction within their ranks to a minimum. Competition may introduce a healthy element to business transactions, but considerable advantages have accrued from common marketing and purchasing schemes, standardization of methods of accounting, common labor market legislation, and trans-

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port agreements, let alone through the framework of the European Free Trade Area (still a reality side by side with the EEC). The initiatives of the Nordic Council have also fostered programs of social legislation, so that Norden now constitutes a common geographical area from the point of view of health services, pension schemes, social benefits, and many other significant issues. The functional integration within the frontiers of Norden is unique.

It is the ultimate paradox that at a time when integration among the peoples of Norden is at its most intense, the national image of the individual countries should have acquired its sharpest expression. For all the common challenges presented by the physical environment, for all the common pressures of the geopolitical setting, for all the proved benefits of an integrated economy and society, any form of political unity in Norden has been and remains a chimera. The map of Northern Europe shows five countries, and it is unlikely to change. Broader groupings within the area can at best claim a secondary allegiance and, under pressure, this will always yield to a first. Harmony exists between the countries of Norden, but each state is a unique entity, steeped in its own mythologies, its inhabitants harboring emotions born of experiences particular to the terrains and territories of their homelands. Whatever else may be said, geography—the space they occupy on the globe—is the final arbiter of their individual and collective fates.

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Patricia Bliss McFate

To See Everything in Another Light

A COUNTRY CALLED SCANDINAVIA—the land of the midnight sun inhabited by the blond and the beautiful—is a fairy tale written by Americans, with a little help from the Swedish film industry. Norden is reality, five countries whose distinctive aspects are fully as significant as their conceptual similarities and cooperative linkages. The Camelot called the Kalmar Union will never come again, but that doomed vision has been replaced by something less tangible and yet more steady: a sense of unity.

Nordic unity has survived, indeed triumphed, over historical fractionation in a manner that is both illogical and utterly natural. Denmark and Sweden, the old kingdoms, once ruled all that is now called Norden. Their brief conjunction as the Kalmar Union lasted only about fifty years. Between 1448, the year of the Union's dissolution, and 1814, Denmark and Sweden fought at least eleven wars. The last of these conflicts, the result of choosing opposite sides in the Napoleonic wars, brought about a shift in Norwegian allegiance, from Denmark to Sweden.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the two kingdoms became five sovereign states. After World War II, these countries considered and rejected two major forms of alliance. The first was a proposal for a Nordic defense union, which died in 1949 when Norway entered NATO. Denmark and Iceland later joined NATO, while Sweden elected to remain neutral, with a commitment to a strong defense. Finland for its part had signed the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union in 1948. The second attempt at alliance, to create a Nordic common market

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(NORDEK), failed in 1970 when Finland refused to sign the treaty. Denmark and Norway then resubmitted applications to the European Economic Community (EEC) for membership, and Sweden applied for association with the EEC under terms that it had dictated. In the end, only Denmark formally entered the EEC, in 1973; the other countries remained members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

It is remarkable that the five countries can think of themselves as a community when they have not been able to develop common security and trade policies. This leads to a fundamental question: What do the Scandinavians mean by unity? Certainly, the concept does not resemble what one finds in the European Community—a group of nation-states participating in common institutions in the fields of economy and defense—and just as certainly, it is not the unity of the East European bloc, which is kept together by ideology and military force. Nor is it a passive coexistence such as that experienced by the countries of South America. What sets the Nordic community apart is the presence of two countervailing forces: a sense of kinship and a demand for individualism.

The path of Nordic unity contains guideposts marking major cooperative efforts in the social sphere, yet it is also littered with conventions and agreements that have failed. In Norden there is a solicitude for each country far beyond what nations outside of Norden sense in one another, but there are also limits placed on efforts at alliance with which Western Europe has never had to contend. What an observer learns is that, while this concept of unity seems unconventional, contradictory even, in terms of post-World War II treaties, it is not so in the eyes of the North European nations. An observer might term Nordic unity *original* or *different;* a more evocative word would be *elusive.* It is this elusive concept which this essay will consider, along with other anomalies; for, if the Greeks invented paradox, the Scandinavians started producing it after the patent ran out.

THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS WHAT THEY SEEM

Nordic unity springs from the people themselves, not from the efforts of outsiders to unite (for good or questionable reasons) a region of the world. Given that, one should start with an analysis of the Nordic peoples. It would be even more tempting to categorize them,

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thereby beating them at their favorite game—labeling. Although no one has drawn upon *Alice in Wonderland* as a guide to Scandinavia (it may be the only territory left unexplored by those indefatigable analysts of Lewis Carroll), one could easily imagine assigning, with a certain amount of glee, the characters in that novel. But to succumb to the desire to label, to identify, is to fall into that very trap which rationality lays in the path of the Scandinavians.

Further, it seems axiomatic that whatever *seems* to be true of Norden or its people can be refuted. The Vikings, commonly believed to be pillagers of society, may well have been its pillars too (or at least settlers). The "gardens of the world"—as the Nordic countries are often labeled—are not abundantly endowed with soil in any place other than Denmark, southern Sweden, and southwest Finland. Most of Greenland is covered with ice.

If one makes a list of impressions that need to be corrected before one can begin to understand Nordic unity, the concept of "Finlandization" must come first. The term has become a label for nations that, by making agreements with the Soviet Union, become entrapped or enslaved. This has been a source of immense frustration for the Finns. Former president Urho Kekkonen, in denying this interpretation of the Finnish relationship with its neighbor, suggested, "Choose some other word if you really want to give offense." President Mauno Koivisto has said that he wishes the word would be dropped from the political vocabulary.

For the record, Finland is not a member of the Warsaw Pact; it is a member of the Nordic Council. The Finnish-Soviet pact of 1948 left the defense of Finland to the Finnish armed forces; it raises the possibility of military assistance from either party only if the other is attacked by Germany, or countries allied to Germany, and requires consultation between Russia and Finland should such an attack be threatened. In 1955, in fact, the Soviets returned the Porkkala naval base, which they had leased in 1944 for a period of fifty years.[1]

Finland is a pluralistic democracy committed to "dynamic neutrality." The Finns hosted the first Strategic Arms Limitation Talks in 1970, and organized the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1975. The country's remarkable ability to balance itself between East and West is also revealed in its trade arrangements: in 1973 it signed treaties with both the COMECON and the Common Market. Urho Kekkonen's formulation of his country's political

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stance has been called "the Finnish Paradox": "The greater the confidence which prevails in relations between Finland and the Soviet Union, the more we Finns can devote ourselves to maintaining and developing our network of relationships with Western countries."[2]

Two other areas of misinformation in need of clearing up are those summoned up by the words "periphery" and "pragmatism." Nordic citizens often speak of themselves as living "on the periphery." More iconoclastic Nordics might say that they live "on top of the world." Yet, those who remember the old song, "I'm sitting on top of world / Just rolling along, singing a song," should not imagine a picture of serene isolation. This top includes the Barents and Norwegian seas and the Kola Peninsula. Located as they are in the North Atlantic, the Nordic countries must participate—like it or not—in a "balance of terror." The word "periphery" is in fact an excellent example of the theory of relativity: Greenland and Iceland may appear far away to Paris and Rome, but they seem near to Washington. In any case, it is hardly to be on the periphery to share a border with the Soviet Union or Germany.

The Nordic peoples often call themselves "pragmatic," a term, like "bourgeois," that is neutral and not at all disparaging in their countries. Outsiders, however, would be well advised not to walk down that garden path. For how can such people be so difficult to grasp? Think of them as practical, restrained, stiff, unbending—and immediately images arise that defy description in any terms other than heroic and romantic: the Westman Islanders fighting the streams of lava from Helgafell and taking back their homes; the Danes helping thousands of Jews to escape to safety in 1943, and the Swedes giving them not only shelter, but citizenship; the Finns suffering in the merciless Winter War; nine Norwegians raiding the Norsk Hydro heavy-water plant in order to cripple German efforts to produce an atomic bomb.

THE SILENT THINGS THAT BUILD BRIDGES

Having identified the dangers inherent in the game of interpretation, we can begin to play—but not without a certain sense of humility, for it is unquestionably true that outsiders overemphasize the similarities in the Nordic countries. Nevertheless, we can begin by listing at least a dozen plus bases for unity. The five countries have:

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geographical proximity; a shared history and one-time (Kalmar) union; a shared cultural heritage; similarly based state languages, with the exception of Finnish; a common Protestant state religion (Lutheran); a set of legal principles based more on Nordic and Germanic than Roman law; peaceful relations with one another for 170 years; internal political stability; constitutionally assured democracies; a noncompetitive stance toward other nations; highly developed levels of engineering sciences and technology; similar goals for social welfare, social security, and equal opportunity; and a respect for work that translates into a serious effort (less successful in Denmark and Finland) to keep unemployment levels below those of Western Europe.

Efforts toward unity are also furthered, of course, when the participating nations have sufficiently stable and similar economic bases. Admittedly, the per capita gross domestic product is only an approximate measure of the general prosperity of a country; using that measurement, however, it is clear that the four larger countries—and particularly Norway and Sweden—enjoy a high standard of living (Table 1).

Nordic unity not only means doing things together, but also doing things in a similar way. Certain behavioral attitudes in Norden reflect both the Protestant ethic and a strong belief in consensual democracy, which in turn are the basis for the mutual respect that leads to cooperative efforts: a belief in honesty and simplicity, a stern common sense, a commitment to a disciplined social order, a desire for representative government, and the wish for a political tranquility that requires highly developed skills in the art of compromise.

Furthermore, and without pressing the case very far, one can argue that the citizens of the Nordic countries, while differing in their attendance at church services and subscription to church doctrine, hold certain beliefs that Martin Luther preached. These can be formulated rather simplistically: the family is the foundation (indeed the model) for society; it is the duty of every person to help others; no one should indulge in self-aggrandizement. In the political sphere, relativism is acceptable, an attitude summed up in the admission, "This is the best we can get."[3]

There is an admirable side to the Scandinavians in their concern for children. In 1981 the Norwegian government established the first

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TABLE 1. Per-Capita GDP (Current Prices Expressed in SEK*)

	1970	1981
Finland	$11,800	$52,000
France	14,500	53,500
Federal Republic of Germany	15,700	56,000
Denmark	16,600	56,800
Sweden	21,200	67,800
Norway	15,000	70,700

Source: *The Swedish Economy* (Stockholm: 1983), p. 11.
*SEK (one Swedish krona) equals U.S. $0.13 in June 1983.

office of Ombudsman for Children's Affairs. Finns instill a love of reading in children at an early age, and it is perhaps because of this that the Finnish citizens borrowed a staggering number of books (72.3 million for a population of 4.7 million) from the public libraries in 1981. During the last few years, the Swedish government has targeted financial support in the areas of library activities for children, the production of high-quality children's literature, and theatre and other performing arts activities. Education is given high priority in the five countries' national budgets.[4]

Through joint projects and separate funds, Norden has contributed generously to the developing nations of the world. If one looks at the percentage of gross national product used for foreign aid and development in 1981, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden have impressive records (Table 2).

Finland has had serious problems of inflation and unemployment, and its percentage therefore was only 0.22 percent in 1980 and 0.28 in 1981, but it is committed to achieve a level of 0.70 by the end of the decade. Iceland, which during the period 1971-76 was granted a total of $1 million in regular assistance from the United Nations Development Program, has now become a donor of development aid (0.05 percent of GNP in 1981). For 1982, Sweden had a provisional ODA figure of 1.02 percent; Norway, of 1.01. Olof Palme called the Swedes "a gentle people." Although "humane" would have been a better term, he was not wrong.

Sadly, this humanitarian urge, shared by all the peoples of Norden, is often expressed in terms of quantitative goals rather than human enrichment. Income levels are easier to plot than emotions, and there is consequently little sympathy for the fiscally well-tended but frus-

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TABLE 2. Official Development Assistance (ODA) as a Percentage of GNP (1981)

	Percent
Italy	0.19
United Kingdom	0.44
France*	0.45
Federal Republic of Germany	0.47
Belgium	0.59
Denmark	0.73
Norway	0.82
Sweden	0.83

Source: *Development Co-operation: 1982 Review* (Paris: OECD, 1982), p. 182.
*Figure for France excludes aid to the Overseas Departments and Territories; including DOM/TOM, the figure would be 0.73.

trated immigrants, the unemployed youth, the idle pensioners. By concentrating on short-term benefits, the system neglects the long-term implications of alienating segments of the population. A recent report by the Swedish National Youth Council argues that, in the welfare state, children and adolescents are "materially satiated but socially starved."[5]

Moreover, while the income levels reached in the Nordic countries are a matter of attention (to say nothing of envy) among small nations, high private consumption is not without its darker side. The consumers—those people who devour phonograph records, videotapes, clothes, and boats—don't have the evangelical streak of their social-democratic forebears. Instead of being soldiers in a battle for a better society, they have become the recipients of its benefits. No wonder some Social Democrats seem so manic-depressive. All those invigorating, rewarding struggles for societal welfare and human decency are reduced nowadays to bouts with paper-laden tigers.

The aphorism heard in Sweden that Swedes "can only hold one opinion at a time" is no longer true, if it ever was. The Swedes are wrestling with many hard questions and conflicting ideologies in the 1980s. One of the toughest questions is compelling enough to engage two disparate worlds, business and the arts: Can creativity be encouraged in a society whose system values collectivity? Ironically, a discussion in Sweden now centers around the "creative" way the

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public revolts against the society—a situation described by Hans Magnus Enzenberger as "The Crisis":

> Thus when the citizens of a country shun its institutions, when an ever-increasing portion of its economic life "goes underground," when new and different social ideas arise—from self-help groups to collectives for self-sufficiency—then it hardly makes sense to complain of moral decline, instability and polarization. These are all primarily signs of life. Independent human action, even when no specific goal can be verbalized, is above all a sign of practical criticism of the established order.[6]

If the Danes—despite Evelyn Waugh's commentary that they are the most "exhilarating" people in Europe—don't always have summer in their smiles, it may be because they are similarly engaged in questioning their institutions. Here, antiwelfare attitudes have taken more than one form of expression, but surely the most peculiar has been Mogens Glistrup's Progress party, a group that has drawn its constituents from small businessmen, the professional class, and those elements of the working class who protest bureaucratic red tape, increases in public expenditures and the public sector, and progressive taxation. Strong support in the elections of 1973 made it Denmark's second largest party, but much of this was lost in 1981, the result no doubt of Glistrup's conviction for tax fraud. Faced with over two hundred charges of tax evasion, he has since been expelled from Parliament, sentenced to three years in prison, and fined heavily.

Whatever the fate of the Progress party, an increasing number of Danes find the social welfare system so expensive, oppressive, and impersonal that their reaction to welfare benefits is hardly one of pleasure, but rather passivity or aggression. Many Nordic sociologists have observed what Bent Rold Andersen has formulated as a dilemma for Denmark: "Material progress, and our efforts to meet social needs and prevent social problems, have become bigger and [grown] faster than ever before in our history . . . [but] contrary to the expectations of many, this does not seem to be followed by an increased sense of well-being and personal happiness."[7]

When the Swedes say that their country is "well organized," the phrase is intended both as a mark of accomplishment *and* a condemnation: what they mean, in fact, is that Sweden is "overly" organized, that there are too many mazes, too much bureaucracy. Icelanders may find a way to triumph over the system, perhaps because

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a small country can tolerate the sort of individuality that insists on personal attention; the Finns have been slower to organize, and as keen observers of the failures of the "Swedish Model," will probably avoid some of its shortcomings; the Norwegians have focused on achieving economic efficiencies. The Swedes and the Danes, however, have suffered the ill effects of systematized welfare as well as its benefits.

While the Scandinavians' increasing skepticism toward their social welfare systems can be viewed as a positive change—the beginnings of a shift from a highly conformist view of the state as benevolent provider to a more introspective questioning of the price of material welfare—there is a negative side too, in terms of future efforts in the area of regional cooperation. If the costs are high and the effort requires a further enlargement of the public sector, the response of the Nordic peoples may be unenthusiastic.

CONNECT FIVE DOTS TO MAKE A STAR: A COMMENTARY ON NORDIC COOPERATION

The history of modern efforts at Nordic unity starts after the Danish-Swedish War of 1814. By the 1840s, academics from Scandinavia, influenced by the romantic movement, were finding bases for closer relations in the commonality of culture, language, and social aspirations. The first meeting of Scandinavian natural scientists took place in 1839; the Scandinavian Dental Association was organized in 1866; the Nordic jurists met in 1872. Other activists in what came to be known as the "pan-Scandinavian movement" included former students of these enthusiastic academics, who, by the 1860s and 70s, had become public officials, business leaders, bankers, and lawyers. The trade unions joined the movement, holding the first Nordic Labor Congress in 1886. The rural populations attending the Danish folk high schools were studying the subject areas recommended by the Danish priest and educator, N.F.S. Grundtvig: national literature and history and Nordic heritage. Grundtvig also advocated a Nordic university to continue the educational process of using culture to strengthen society. The Norden Associations—volunteer groups of citizens and organizations whose sole purpose has been to promote Nordic cooperation—established offices in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden in 1919, in Iceland in 1922, and in Finland in 1924. Despite

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these promising beginnings, formal efforts at cooperation had to wait until after the Second World War because of various disruptive events, including Denmark's loss of two fifths of her territory, the creation of three new Nordic nations, and several territorial disputes.

In 1856 Oscar I of Sweden participated in a pan-Scandinavian meeting and declared, "From now on, war between the Scandinavian brothers is impossible." On that point he was correct; as Denmark discovered in 1863, however, when its duchies of Schleswig and Holstein were under attack from Prussian and Austrian troops, this sense of brotherhood did not extend to Swedish military support. This dramatic failure at cooperation in the area of defense may have led to the realization that a unified Scandinavia was impossible. Certainly, from that time on, cooperative efforts took the form of low-key, adaptable steps.

In 1905 Norway and Sweden formally split apart. In 1917 Finland, which had been severed from Sweden by Russia in 1809, established itself as a republic. A dispute of several years between Finland and Sweden over the Åland Islands had to be settled by the League of Nations in 1921. In 1933 a dispute between Denmark and Norway over territorial rights to eastern portions of Greenland was settled by the International Court. In 1944, after having been granted Home Rule by Denmark in 1918, Iceland became an independent republic, as part of a constitutional agreement allowing either country to cut the ties after twenty-five years.

During World War II, the five countries existed under very different circumstances: Denmark was occupied by Germany; Finland was allied with Germany against the Soviet Union (1941-44); Iceland was occupied by the British in 1940, then entered into a defense agreement with the United States in 1941; Norway was defeated by Germany; and Sweden remained neutral. A formal gathering of the countries' ministers of education and cultural affairs took place in 1938—not a very propitious time for cooperation; a second meeting was held after the Second World War in 1945. In the years that followed, the Nordic Council was created, holding its first session in 1953; the Treaty of Cooperation between the five countries was signed on March 23, 1962; and formal agreements were concluded (during the period 1954-77) in the areas of cultural exchange, cultural funding, transportation and communications, protection of the environment, a common labor market, social security, a commonly

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held investment bank, national frontiers, passport regulations, development assistance projects, and technological and industrial development.[8]

Nordic cooperation has been both a public success and a quiet failure. Those who observe the efforts to achieve cooperation sense the frustrations that lie behind those efforts. Since the opening in 1977 of the world's largest current cable, the Organization for Nordic Electrical Cooperation, NORDEL, has brought about utilization of temporary surpluses of electricity across the neighboring borders of the four larger countries. No similar cooperative sharing exists, however, in oil and gas production, mining and manufacturing, and agriculture. Examples of cooperation in transportation—interstate highways and bridges, air linkages, sea links—are many, but the Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) represents only three of the five countries (Finnair and Loftleidir serve the other two), and the projected Öresund Bridge between Denmark and Sweden has yet to be built.

Nordita, the Nordic Institute of Theoretical Nuclear Physics, is the oldest cooperative research institute. There is also research collaboration in maritime law, Nordic folklore, criminology, and in the area of volcanic phenomena. Surprisingly, there are few ventures in the fields of biotechnology, bioengineering, and related areas in medical research. According to Elisabeth Helander, a Finnish physicist, "Today it is often easier for scientists from the Nordic countries to participate in West European research projects than to start joint Nordic projects. Also, many Nordic scientists know their American colleagues better than those of the neighbouring countries."[9]

The existence, since 1954, of a common labor market has provided a welcome flexibility for those workers seeking employment, but it has not done so without causing strains on the natives of particular areas. Since citizens of Norden are entitled to the same social security rights when they move to another Nordic country, certain nations—most notably Sweden—have assumed a large burden of social services for those Scandinavians working and residing in their country, whether on a temporary or permanent basis. Denmark and Sweden also have the largest numbers of people of non-Nordic nationality in residence—approximately 190,000 in Sweden (not including approximately 172,000 Finns) and about 80,000 in Denmark—and these residents often require extensive social services.[10] The labor

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market is not entirely open: professionals do not have the same mobility since the common labor market does not apply, for example, to law, accountancy, and library science, and laws only recently were extended to allow health professionals the right to participate.

A report in spring 1981 by the Nordic Industrial Federation, entitled "The Corporate View of Nordic Industrial Cooperation," found that, because of the multitude of laws and regulations which industrialists believe discourage the establishment of new enterprises across national borders, Scandinavian enterprises prefer to invest outside of Norden. According to the report, "The Danish attitude [toward] investments in another Nordic country was fairly negative, while the Finns and the Swedes were positive. Norwegian investments showed a tendency to favor other parts of the world."[11] The failure of the "Volvo Agreement," which would have been a landmark exchange of 40 percent of Volvo in return for Norwegian oil and gas interests in the North Sea, is often cited as an example of the difficulty of developing large-scale cooperative industrial projects. The governments of Norway and Sweden did not turn down the agreement; rather, it was rejected by the company's institutional shareholders, who, according to Pehr Gyllenhammar, chief executive officer of the company, "at that time favoured a concentration strategy for Volvo."[12]

There have been notable bilateral business ventures: Volvo has a pact with Valmet (Finland); Saab cars are partially manufactured in Finland; the Finnish government purchases Swedish military airplanes and artillery; and several Nordic firms, for example, Kone, Nokia, Norsk Hydro, and Wärtsila, are listed on the Swedish stock exchange. Recently, Norsk Hydro, a Norwegian firm, moved its Swedish base from Gothenberg to Stockholm and stepped up its activities in the area of selling oil in Swedish markets.

Although the Nordic Investment Bank, set up in 1976, has supported a wide variety of Nordic investment and export projects, most Nordic business and governmental institutions have yet to recognize the possibilities for cooperative projects. When Norden is viewed as a single entity, its production of natural gas, crude petroleum, iron ore, and wood and wood products is higher than that of France or West Germany. Table 3 shows imports and exports per capita (expressed in U.S. dollars) for the three areas in 1981.

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TABLE 3. Imports and Exports Per Capita in 1981 (in U.S. dollars)

	Norden	France	German Federal Republic
Imports	$3,357	$2,235	$2,644
Exports	3,356	1,878	2,840

Source: *Yearbook of Nordic Statistics*, "The Nordic Countries—Some Basic Data" (Table 1), p. 27.

Transregional development on a scale far greater than is the case today—a pooled development of resources and a system of shared production, internal distribution, and export—could make Norden an economic power in Europe far beyond the sum of its five countries' individual potentials. What this scheme would require, beyond cooperation, is trust; and that in turn demands that the countries put aside individual concerns and think instead of "the family." It also poses the question: Who are the risk-takers?

The official side of Nordic cooperation has been effective in the areas of social welfare, labor policy, law, aid to developing nations, and United Nations peacekeeping efforts. Failures in economic and strategic unification have been counterbalanced by new institutions dedicated to enhanced cooperation: the Nordic Council was born out of the unsuccessful negotiations for a defense union; the formalizing of a previously informal structure, the Nordic Council of Ministers, was a reaction to the failure of NORDEK.

Among the groups established for cooperative purposes, the Nordic Council receives a mixed press. A forum for debate and advice, it is not a regional parliament, and it plays only a consultative role; yet its unicameral structure allows for uniquely close contact between the ministers and parliamentarians of each country, and across borders and sometimes even political party lines. It is unquestionably the most official symbol of Nordic cooperation and integration. The Council's efforts have stirred up a good deal of notice from both outside the body and from within. During the 1979 session, a Norwegian delegate pointed to sixty items on the agenda that had been unresolved for over fifty years.[13] Per Häkkerup's pronouncement in 1964 on the failure of a proposal for a Nordic customs union epitomizes the Council's drawbacks: "The outcome of concerted work in the Nordic Council was thirteen thousand pages of documents for

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and against a customs union. But while we were discussing and elaborating these problems from every conceivable angle, developments in Europe passed us by."[14]

When questioned about the Nordic Council, selected members of the various parliaments, civil servants, and government members thought the Council should concentrate on fewer and more important tasks, and said they found its structure too cumbersome and its deliberations too slow. They were opposed to the notion of giving the Council supranational powers, and admitted that the Council did not have popular support in their countries.[15] In the opinion poll *Skal vi samarbejde?* (Shall We Cooperate?) taken in 1983, 83 percent of the Nordic citizens questioned had heard of the Nordic Council, but only 16 percent spontaneously cited the Council or the Council of Ministers as an example of Nordic cooperation. Their opinion of the Nordic Council was generally favorable—they believed it was prepared to take initiatives and that it was future-oriented—but they also found it to be "bureaucratic."[16]

The Council is not alone in being criticized. Since the 1970s, one hears complaints in Sweden that it has been made responsible for all, or at least most, of the costs of Nordic projects while the other countries contribute only nonfinancial support. The countercharge is that Sweden has placed "only her second-rank politicians in Nordic affairs while her neighbours give their political best to solving common problems."[17]

Setting aside the "Nordic jet set"—those governmental officials and organizational bureaucrats who must work, or want to, on official cooperative programs—Scandinavians who believe in Nordic cooperation have surprisingly varied occupations. According to *Skal vi samarbejde?* the typical "Nordist" is between twenty-five and forty-nine, well educated, in a "high social group," living in a large city, and interested in international cooperation in general. If the person is Danish, Norwegian, or Swedish, his or her political leanings are most likely to be toward the left; if Finnish or Icelandic, to the right.[18] The study reveals that interest in Nordic cooperation varied: Icelanders were extremely enthusiastic, while the Finns were the least interested. The Icelanders also, along with the Swedes and the Norwegians, favored cooperation with the United States, whereas the Danes looked to Western Europe, and the Finns to the Soviet Union. (The Finnish reaction was probably related to Fenno-Soviet cooperation in the

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area of commerce—which, while state-regulated and centralized, has often been successful—rather than cultural cooperation—which has been less emphasized.)

Asked to name areas of Nordic cooperation, the respondents in the opinion poll cited industrial cooperation, trade, import/export, commerce, radio and television projects, the satellite system, energy monitoring, SAS, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the peace movement, a Nordic nuclear-free zone, and cultural cooperation. Asked to rank the most important areas, the respondents listed their concerns: elimination of pollution and protection of the environment; self-sufficiency in energy needs; and strengthening the influence of the Nordic countries in the international sphere.

Pehr Gyllenhammar has painted a portrait of the darker side of Nordic cooperation:

> If we wanted to build a Nordic Area, we have not succeeded. We travel on the proudest official visits to countries other than our own. We provide symbols for countries outside the Nordic Area, and very few for ourselves. We are, in some way, the frustrated bearers of a concept: we are possibly possessed of a Nordic concept, but we seek to advance it without any great generosity in our proposals and, notably, without any fire.[19]

Without detracting from that eloquent statement, we can look at one generally successful area of cooperation, that of "culture." A linguistic chameleon in Norden, culture includes education at all levels and in all manner of teaching environments; research in all the disciplinary fields; and the humanities and the arts as expressed in both elitist and populist terms, including, for example, the media, social and labor history, folk culture, and sometimes sports.

Grundtvig's efforts to develop a sense of Nordic culture were taken up by the Norden Associations. That they are influential shows up in the fact that the propositions related to the common labor market, social security benefits, and common passports were first prepared by the Norden Associations before they were transformed into country agreements. Another initiative—the service offered to publishing houses of providing special textbook revision committees—has brought about the deletion of many statements reflecting national prejudices from historical texts used in Norden.

Between 1945 and 1970, official efforts in the area of cultural cooperation were recommended by the Nordic Cultural Commis-

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sion, an appointed body of part-time advisers and full-time senior civil servants. The Nordic Council established its Literary and Music Prizes during this period, in 1962 and 1965. In 1971 a Nordic cultural treaty was signed in Helsinki, providing, among other things, for the replacement of the informal cultural commission, which was sometimes arbitrary or self-serving in its judgments, with an initiating, coordinating, and executive body, the Secretariat for Nordic Cultural Cooperation. A Nordic Cultural Fund was created in 1966. In 1983 the cultural budget for jointly financed Nordic institutions, committees, and projects came to 113 million Danish kroner (at the time, approximately 11.9 million U.S. dollars).

Demonstrations throughout Europe during the late 1960s signaled the desire to open up educational and cultural institutions to wider audiences. The differences in action and intensity were not great between Scandinavia and its neighbors, but the background of the cultural revolution and the follow-through were distinctively Nordic in aspect and approach. Unlike the larger European countries, those of Norden entered the twentieth century with a sense of cultural identity that cut across social classes. In Norden, as in Ireland, culture served two causes—nationalism and equality. Thus cultural elitism was challenged there earlier than in other parts of Europe.

Social responsibility could have served as a theme in the exhibition organized by the Swedish Society of Industrial Design (1909), the exhibition at the Liljevalchs Art Gallery (1917), and the Stockholm Exhibition of 1930. In all three shows, handsome, efficient, inexpensive designs for urban living were featured. In the slogan *vackrare vardagsvara* (More beautiful things for everyday use), aesthetics was wedded to utility. The slogan reflected a belief that design should be linked to the sociopolitical movements of its time: that is, that while design reflected the values of the society in which it was created, it also had a responsibility to improve the quality of life of that society.

But despite the early connections between social and cultural progress in the world of design, the cultural "revolution" caused some wrenches in the system in Norden, most particularly in Sweden. In the first place, whereas social democracy was a movement in which definitions and rights could be defined and then won, cultural democracy proved to be a more abstract concept. Those who find comfort in labeling or categorizing will be uneasy: culture, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder, and to the question of what culture means,

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there are as many answers as there are respondents. In Norden, as in other parts of the developed world, there is a traditional view of culture as a series of artistic activities grouped around the fine and performing arts and the humanities. And there is an anthropological view of culture as everything reflective of a people, including sports and work. In Sweden, for example, the elitists tend to favor centralized cultural bureaucracies and support for established institutions; the populists advocate regionalization and cultural organizations at the grass roots. The tension between these points of view brings out a good deal of rhetorical and ideological posturing, particularly because the cultural budget is significant.

The Swedish Social-Democratic approach to the cultural revolution of the 1960s was pragmatic: the development of bureaucracies to serve as a means of distributing cultural programs outside of Stockholm, and as a way of giving artists more opportunities for work. By the 1970s these efforts had produced many new orchestras, theatre groups, and other cultural institutions. At its best, this system undoubtedly contributed to a cultural awakening in the country; at its worst, culture was diminished to a "distribution problem"—as one Stockholm museum director ironically put it, a question of "what to put in crates and send to the regions." It is only in the 1980s, and particularly in the cultural pages of newspapers such as *Dagens Nyheter* and in books, that one begins to see the Swedes debating the central issues of excellence versus equality, accomplishment versus potential, national standards versus regional needs. The fact that this lively debate is centered in the private sector may explain why cultural cooperation has been at its best when it has been carried out informally and free of country or party politics.

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Several recent books have explored the subject of Nordic cooperation for an English-speaking audience.[20] Unquestionably the concept works—and could work even better in the future. But this does not explain how Nordic unity came about or what it consists of. Part of the answer lies in history; the rest must be expressed in metaphorical terms.

Several plausible theories explain why Nordic consciousness was raised in the 1950s. One is that the postwar leaders of Denmark,

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Norway, and Sweden had been colleagues in the days of the Social-Democratic youth movement and in the trade unions, and thus felt an ideological closeness. Another is that some Nordic leaders believed that the negotiations leading to the European Community were messy and complicated. They watched with apprehension as the United Nations, which they had eagerly joined, could not protect certain nations from being drawn behind the Iron Curtain. Grand designs were not the style of the Scandinavians; they were particularly distrustful of Adenauer, de Gasperi, and Schuman, who, they felt, espoused a predominantly Catholic union of countries that would crusade against socialism. Even the brilliance of Monnet's vision could not sway them.

Since the Nordic Interparliamentary Union, an informal gathering of prominent politicians, had been meeting for some time, it was not surprising that it was there, in 1951, after the collapse of the proposal for a Nordic defense union, that Hans Hedtoft, the Danish prime minister, argued for a Nordic Council. The Danes also encouraged the adoption of a more formal structure for Nordic cooperation in 1971 after the failure of NORDEK. Functionalist ideas—agreements based on specific areas of cooperation—seemed more appealing to Nordic minds than federalist unions. These Nordic politicians would have approved of Daniel Boorstin's dictum: "Institutions are not and should not be the grand creations of men toward large ends and outspoken values; rather they are organisms which grow out of the soil in which they are rooted and out of the tradition from which they have sprung."[21]

Union is a word that gives Scandinavians pause—not surprisingly, given a history of some uncomfortable alliances. The attempts to expand the Atlantic Treaty Organization into a European defense system did not please the Norwegian government, and the defeat of the plan by one of its original supporters, France, seemed capricious to those who believed they should hold fast to their opinions. The Council of Europe has been a more appealing structure than the EEC because it, like the Nordic Council, is a forum for debate that lacks legislative power.

Sweden and Denmark were the proponents of the efforts at Nordic defense and economic unions. Sweden put forward the idea of a defense union that would require neutrality of its partners, but with a commitment to defense of any member nation attacked by a third

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party. Denmark initially agreed, but eventually it concluded—as did Norway and Iceland (which had proclaimed themselves neutral in World War II to no effect)—that the union could not provide security. "Stalin's menace, the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948 and the coming of the Cold War sounded the death-knell for the Scandinavian Defense Union."[22]

The failure of the second application of both Denmark and Britain for membership in the EEC was the impetus for the former's proposal for NORDEK. When given the opportunity, and a public referendum with a 64 percent majority vote in favor, the Danish government made its third application to the EEC and was admitted in 1973. It was an economic factor—a desire to reach out to West European markets—that brought Denmark into the EEC; another economic factor—fear of an adverse impact of the Common Agricultural Policy—kept Norway out. When a referendum was held there, a coalition of farmers, smallholders, fishermen, radical urban dwellers, and those representing the counterculture brought about a 53.5 percent vote against membership, causing the Norwegian government considerable grief.

In the acronym NORDEK (Nordic Economic), the word "union" was quite deliberately omitted to calm the Finns and Swedes (who feared a compromise in their neutral stance through association with two NATO countries) and the Norwegians (who, ironically, also feared a compromise in their defense stance by association with two neutral countries). Finland's withdrawal from the proposed union was apparently triggered both by Soviet concerns and by its sense that the union would be incompatible with its own security policy. But other factors influenced Finland's decision as well: the stated hopes of the governments of Denmark and Norway for post-NORDEK negotiation with the Community, and the news of a projected tour of the European capitals by the Swedish prime minister, Olof Palme, to assess the chances of either a relationship between the EEC and Sweden or between NORDEK and the EEC. Ultimately, the union failed because of a basic difference in perception: Sweden and Finland saw NORDEK as a separate entity from the European Economic Community, whereas Denmark and Norway saw it as a connection to the EEC. As Clive Archer has quaintly pointed out, "The whole negotiations resembled a Nordic quadrille with the four couples (Iceland was a wallflower) returning to 'all square' after a series

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of careful manoeuvres."[23] It was EFTA that first brought the Nordic countries into economic cooperation, but when the countries later made their trading arrangements with the EEC, each undertook a separate negotiation.

The major efforts at Nordic union carried the password, "All or none"—no partial solutions, that is, in which some countries participated and others did not. This being the case, there were no treaties to sign. That fact plus a "fundamental unwillingness for bold and creative initiatives in inter-Nordic relations" have resulted in the absence of economic and political alliances.[24]

Nordic unity, then, is a matter of cooperation rather than one of union. But there is nothing magical about treaties. The United States feels no closer to the Soviet Union because it has signed a five-year pact with that country to sell it grain. And although most Americans have some sympathetic response toward the NATO nations, this ranges from strong feelings of allegiance to grudging acceptance. To look at the EEC is to discover its present dilemma, so aptly summarized by David Watt: "So far the Community has not had much success in promoting convergence among the existing members and has even, according to its detractors, aggravated divergence."[25] The West European nations came with varying degrees of reluctance to economic and military alliance. The Nordic countries go their own way—cooperating where they can, diverging where they must.

Another source for the Nordic sense of unity is their common missionary zeal: the Scandinavian countries believe in their roles as social conscience for the world. This belief has some justification. The Icelanders' Althing was so effective that a majority vote in 1000 A.D. determined that the Icelanders would adopt Christianity. (Quiet revolutions are the trademark of Scandinavia: witness, for example, the bloodless rise of social democracy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.) Finland was the first European country to give women the vote. Norden may have been a late-comer in the field of industrial development, but when modern industry arrived, the September Compromise in Denmark (1899) and the Saltsjöbaden Agreement in Sweden (1938) provided the testing grounds for labor relations and collective bargaining that set standards for the world. The Nordic free labor market, begun in 1954, has been the model for the scheme developed by the European Community.

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The Scandinavians have searched for a role to play on the international stage in the areas of global security, North-South relations, Third World development, and peace in the Middle East. In the UN, the countries often issue joint declarations before the General Assembly. The five Nordic foreign ministers meet to exchange views, and while there is no pressure to take a common position on matters of foreign policy, the wish to give each country's views considerable thought often ends in mutually agreed-upon resolutions.[26]

The image of Norden as a theater of action rather than a social laboratory seems apt, but whatever metaphor is used, there is no question that it wishes to serve as a model for other countries. Urho Kekkonen put this attitude into words in a speech before the Swedish Institute of International Affairs in May 1978: "Being small countries, we have become resigned to thinking that we are first and foremost objects of international politics. But the Nordic countries are also subjects and makers of policy in their own right." With this view in mind, it is not surprising that Olof Palme headed the Independent Commission on Security and Disarmament, or has served as the official UN mediator in the Iran-Iraq War.[27]

There is one joint Nordic executive board member in the International Monetary Fund, two Nordic members on the Committee for Service Transactions and Capital Movements in the OECD, and a Nordic director (and an alternate) on the World Bank directorate. In the official scientific unions, one delegate often represents the region. Those serving in Nordic embassies and legations throughout the world have a natural affinity for one another. Relationships between Nordic civil servants have a special character—they are direct, often informal, usually close.

One does not find the same sort of neighborly interest in other countries as in Scandinavia. Neither Italy nor Germany, both of whom have known the devastation of being on the "wrong side" of a war, displays a social responsibility that extends beyond its borders. The United States pays far too little attention to Canada and Mexico. Britain pays the wrong sort of attention to Ireland. Italy and France are not very interested in each other, nor are the Netherlands and West Germany. On the other hand, Iceland is a long way from Finland, but the countries are linked together by treaties, by the Nordic Council, and by other cooperative structures; more important, they recognize that they are the western and eastern outposts of the Nor-

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dic world. Of course there are strategic advantages to regional unity: Sweden can be neutral because Finland is there, and vice versa.

Many leaders in the Nordic countries have approached regional cooperation with the same passionate optimism as those who a few decades ago tried to build what Winston Churchill called "the United States of Europe," and in many ways—unlike their West European counterparts—they have succeeded. This is not to say that there have not been serious quarrels in recent years. Denmark was surprised when Finland pulled out of NORDEK. Sweden was distressed when Norway elected to join NATO instead of a Nordic defense union. Norway and Denmark were troubled by Swedish neutrality during the Second World War. A Nordic customs union failed in 1958 because the Norwegian government, after showing initial interest in the project, refused to participate. Finland and Norway clashed in 1980 over the storage of U.S. arms in depots in the central Trøndelag district. Denmark's refusal in 1982, after years of intense negotiations among the Nordic countries, to participate in a common satellite system (NORDSAT) upset the other countries. The potential for more flare-ups in the future is evident in the questions being asked in the capitals: Can Denmark manage to balance its obligations to two demanding communities, Europe and Norden? Can Norway look both west and east? Can the countries' industries consider Nordic aims when they need foreign investments and markets?

A recent incident illustrates the potential for failure in Nordic unity. For over ten years there has been a dispute between Denmark and Sweden over where their territorial borders are set. The governments have on occasion negotiated on this issue, although not often in the last few years. In the summer of 1983, the Swedish government reacted strongly to reports that a Danish shipping firm had plans to drill for natural gas off a tiny Danish island in waters that were believed by the Swedes to be Swedish. The last two weeks of August were spent with voices raised on both sides. After the Swedish prime minister compared the situation to the Argentinian intrusion upon British territorial rights to the Falkland Islands, the Danish newspapers reacted with articles expressing violent protest. The Swedish newspapers followed suit. The Danish and Swedish prime ministers then announced that they were trying to reach a compromise, and their foreign ministries prepared to try to sort out the details.

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What makes this event worth telling is that what is jokingly referred to as the "recent war between Sweden and Denmark" was *not* a war—thanks to the concept of Nordic unity; when it comes to national interests, however, the Scandinavian countries often refuse to compromise even when the issue seems to be "a storm in a water glass." Outsiders have to recognize that three of the five countries only became totally independent nations in this century, and thus feel a particular need to assert their national identity. The older kingdoms, particularly in their newly reduced state, also sense that the first unit of concern has to be the nation.

THE NORTH STAR GUIDES US HOME

The Nordic countries, far from the centers of power in Europe, slow to industrialize, and harboring no imperialist ambitions beyond holding onto their old territories, were content to make their garden grow (which they did very well indeed) in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. World War II threw the question of isolation—self-imposed or geographically determined—out the window. Countries that had experienced no militaristic stirrings since 1814 (with the exception of Denmark, fighting in 1863 to keep its own territory) found themselves occupied or beleaguered. The oil crisis of 1973 pulled the countries into a European-wide recession; the discovery of oil and natural gas reserves in the North Sea changed the minds of all those who had once dismissed Norway and, by association, northern Sweden and Finland, as "small" states. Given the existence of new energy sources and the fact that their location has made the Nordic countries a strategically "hot" area, Nordic industrial relations and defense positions are bound to alter in the future. In such a shifting environment, it becomes all the more important to understand what links the five countries together, what that elusive concept Nordic unity means.

Efforts to describe the concept sometimes take unintentionally comic turns. Nils Andrén has proposed a "cobweb" theory of integration in which individual strands, however small, accumulate to create a web of connections.[28] The theory is extremely helpful in explaining that, in Norden, small—even miniscule—efforts strengthen the unification of systems and people. But several other commentators, intrigued by the image of the cobweb, have ingeniously tried

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to identify the Nordic Council as the spider. (Thus far, there have been no candidates for the role of the flies.)

The word "integration" is not without some puzzling aspects. Johan Galtung has posited two bases for integration: similarity and interdependence.[29] The Nordic countries are of course similar in background and values, but interdependence is another question. While concern for one another is discernible in the dynamics of the various strategic positions, the countries' prime motivation seems to be to reduce the possibility of superpower interference in the region. Thus, as Bengt Sundelius has pointed out, "the driving force for Nordic cooperation today is perhaps not as much a desire to unite the region as a wish to keep it intact."[30]

It is a wonder how any efforts at Nordic unity succeed at all considering the things that Scandinavians have to say about one another. Give the workingman of Norden the opportunity to vent his spleen, and he will rehearse all the old ethnic clichés: the Danes are treacherous; the Finns, gypsies; the Icelanders, totally incomprehensible; the Norwegians, thickheaded; the Swedes, self-righteous puritans. Yet, despite these petty sentiments (which are usually based on scraps of history and personal experiences), there are good reasons why the Nordic peoples feel at home with one another. Scandinavians do not have to carry passports when traveling throughout the region. Workers know that they can move across borders and have equal rights to work, to medical benefits, to social services, to social security, and to a pension. Citizens of the four larger countries have the right to legal redress if pollution from *any* of the countries has a deleterious effect on their local environment. Swedes drive on the right-hand side of the road as a concession to Nordic unity. Students in higher education are aware that they can take coursework and examinations in any Nordic university, and that they are eligible for financial aid while studying in any country. Bankers participating in the Nordic Bank and Scandinavian Bank cartels believe that thinking in regional terms has permitted their financial institutions to make an impact on the major financial centers of London, New York, Zurich, and elsewhere. But what an American can appreciate most as a sign of Nordic "citizenship" is the presence in all five countries of open, lively (sometimes aggressive) public debate, in what Klaus Rifbjerg, the Danish philosopher and writer, has called an "unbroken tradition of critical passion."[31]

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Strong cross-country ties exist in the folk high-school and *folkhets hus* movements, the temperance and sports movements, the handicrafts organizations, the cooperatives for consumers and for farmers, the umbrella organizations for labor and those for industry, the field of culture (writers, teachers, and artists unions), youth organizations, and the Norden Associations. The more informal linkages in the world of the humanities and arts are especially productive. Even without the blessing of the common labor market, academics move with ease in another Nordic country's institutions or attend Nordic conferences in the research fields. Yrsa Stenius, a Finnish woman serving as the editor of the Swedish Social-Democratic newspaper *Aftonbladet;* Per Olov Enquist, a Swede living in Copenhagen and contributing to Danish cultural life; Lassa Pöysti, the Finnish-born director of the Swedish Dramatic Theatre; Per Lie, a Norwegian dancer working in the Swedish Cullberg Ballet—none has sensed any dislocation in their new surroundings because, in all senses of the expression, they "speak the language." Yet those in the field of culture feel the tensions between national identity and international recognition. Jörn Donner, a Swedish-speaking Finn, writes in his autobiography: "I consider it an important element in all artistic work to try to question or define national identity: to know what nation one belongs to and why."[32]

What, then, holds the countries together? Formal agreements and informal exchanges are certainly answers, but two additional elements should be considered: trust and kinship. Little empirical research has been conducted on the first subject, but a recent study of representative samples of the publics of the European Community countries reaches some interesting conclusions.[33] A multivariate analysis of a number of factors that seem to influence trust between nations reveals that only four variables show significant effects: economic development (measured in terms of GNP per capita); a common language group; a democratic political system; and having been on the same side in World War II. The first three factors clearly apply to the Nordic countries. Primordial ties—race, religion, and geographic proximity—had surprisingly little impact on the results. This may explain why the countries of Southeast Asia, Africa, and Central America, despite their common cultural heritage, sometimes war with one another. The primordial ties binding the Nordic countries

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probably do not in themselves create trust, but they are not insignificant when added to other, more influential factors.

One sometimes hears the phrase "the Nordic family." The analogy is helpful, not because one can try to pick out the big brother and the naughty little sister, but because it suggests kinship. The countries are a family that grew up together, sharing experiences and beliefs. Now they live apart, but they are still siblings. And, although they tease one another, and occasionally quarrel bitterly, they won't fight.

The Nordic peoples' sense of kinship is not unlike that of the Arabs, for all the apparent dissimilarities in the two peoples. The two sets of countries speak exotic languages, binding them in their belief that only they can completely understand one another. (They are also bound by religious, historical, and geographical ties.) They share a common goal of achieving a high standard of living for their people. (Norway may be on its way to becoming the Kuwait of the North.) A Pan-Arabic union will never be possible, but there is something deeper and more mysterious that allows Arabs to think of themselves as united against others. So, too, the Nordic peoples present a united front to the world no matter how much they argue with one another within the "family." Clearly, the Arabs and the Nordics know the reference group to which they belong.

The Nordic sense of affinity and of a common destiny seems a hopeful signal to the world, however flickering that signal may be. Walking near the beach at Skagen, looking at things in the Northern light, one remembers the lines from Pentti Saarikoski: "But I still, still want to see / everything in another light, the sea's light." Seen in the Northern light, Nordic unity, based on an ideal and the will to cooperate, is a bright example of the trust among nations that leads to global peace.

ENDNOTES

The author is deeply grateful for the incisive comments on this paper given by her colleagues: Bent Rold Andersen, Marshall Brement, Gylfi Gíslason, Stephen Graubard, Johan Jørgen Holst, Matti Klinge, Ulf W. Lundin, Arne Ruth, Claes Sweger, and Hans Zetterberg.

[1]The Finns often stress that their army was not defeated in the Second World War, nor was the country occupied by the Soviets. Thus the Armistice of 1944 was the result of negotiation, not capitulation. The price they paid for fighting for their country was high: 86,000 dead, 189,500 wounded, and 25,600 missing between

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1939 and 1945, when the total population was 3.5 million. Finland also lost Petsamo and the areas of Karelia and Salla, which it had occupied in the course of the war.

[2]Urho Kekkonen, *A President's View*, translated by Gregory Coogan (London: 1982), p. 113.

[3]For the formulation of these concepts (and others), see Jaroslav Pelikan, "The Enduring Relevance of Martin Luther 500 Years after His Birth," *New York Times Magazine*, September 18, 1983, pp. 42-45, 99-104.

[4]In Denmark (1979), it was 23.8 percent of the budget; in Finland (1980), 26.5; in Norway (1980), 27.2; in Sweden (1980), 20.7; and in Iceland (1980), 22.2. Calculated from the *Yearbook of Nordic Statistics: 1982* (Stockholm and Copenhagen: 1983), "Government Final Consumption by Purpose" (Table 184), pp. 262-63. The Icelandic figures were contributed by Gylfi Gíslason. No later comparative figures are available.

[5]Benny Henriksson, *Not for Sale: Young People in Society* (Aberdeen: 1983), p. xvi. The book is a translation, by Susan Davies and Irene Scobbie, of *Pengarna eller livet*, which is, in turn, the summary of the Swedish National Youth Council's report *Ej till salu*.

[6]Hans Magnus Enzenberger, "The Crisis," reprinted from *Svensk Host*, translated by Kjersti D. Board, *Scandinavian Review*, June 1983, p. 33.

[7]Bent Rold Andersen, *Economic Development and Social Policy: Three Lectures* (Copenhagen: 1982), p. 8.

[8]Appendix A traces the major governmental efforts at furthering Nordic unity since World War II.

[9]Taken from "The Nordic Region in the International Context of Technology." Paper presented by Elisabeth Helander at the Aspen Institute Conference on the Nordic Countries, Saltsjöbaden, Sweden, June 16-20, 1982.

[10]*Yearbook of Nordic Statistics*, "Population by Citizenship" (Table 16), pp. 42-43.

[11]Ragnar Sohlman, "What Should a Manager Know about the Nordic Countries?" Address given March 17, 1982, at a seminar held by the Union of Nordic Economics Students, in Stockholm.

[12]Pehr G. Gyllenhammar, "Creating a Nordic Future." Paper included in materials for the Aspen Institute Conference on the Nordic Countries.

[13]Barry Turner with Gunilla Nordquist, *The Other European Community* (London: 1982), p. 173.

[14]Erik Solem, *The Nordic Council and Scandinavian Integration* (New York: 1977), p. 75.

[15]Ibid., pp. 174-77.

[16]*Skal vi samarbejde? Opinionsanalyse fra de nordiske lande Foråret 1983: Udgivet af Nordisk Råd* (Copenhagen and Stockholm: 1983), p. 9.

[17]Turner and Nordquist, *The Other European Community*, p. 170.

[18]*Skal vi samarbejde?* p. 8.

[19]Pehr G. Gyllenhammar, "Norwegian-Swedish Cooperation: Experience, Opportunities, and Visions." Remarks at the Gothenburg Forum, April 28, 1981.

[20]See, for example, *Nordic Democracy* (Copenhagen: 1981); Franz Wendt, *Cooperation in the Nordic Countries* (Stockholm: 1981); *The Other European Community; The Nordic Council and Scandinavian Integration; The Nordic Model*, edited by Clive Archer and Stephen Maxwell (Hampshire, England: 1980); *Foreign Policies of Northern Europe*, edited by Bengt Sundelius (Boulder, Colorado: 1982); *Nordic Cultural Cooperation* (Copenhagen: 1980); *Cooperation Agree-*

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ments between the Nordic Countries (Stockholm: 1978); *The Norden Associations* (Stockholm: 1974).

[21]Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics* (Chicago: 1958), p. 6.

[22]Neil Elder, Alastair H. Thomas, and David Arter, *The Consensual Democracies?* (Oxford: 1982), p. 201.

[23]Clive Archer, "Nordic Co-operation: A Model for the British Isles," in *The Nordic Model,* p. 15.

[24]Nils Andrén, "Changing Strategic Perspectives in Northern Europe," *Foreign Policies of Northern Europe,* p. 88.

[25]David Watt, "The Community: Performance and Prospects," *Daedalus* (Winter 1979), p. 80.

[26]In their meeting in September 1983, for example, the Nordic foreign ministers discussed and reached agreement on a number of international issues: they called for "greater efforts" on the part of the disarmament committee in Geneva, and urged that the START and INF negotiations lead, without delay, to a halting of armament buildup and development and to "substantial reductions" in nuclear weapons; they asked the Lebanese factions to contribute to a "sincere dialogue" on restoration of that country's internal order, and commended UNIFIL for its peacekeeping role; they reaffirmed Nordic support for a Middle East peace based on "security for all states in the region, including Israel, and justice for all peoples, including the Palestinians"; and they "strongly" denounced the South African government for its blockade of Lesotho and "illegal occupation" of Namibia. This information is taken from the Communiqué from the meeting of Nordic Foreign Ministers, September 5-6, 1983.

[27]It is also significant that the first two secretaries-general of the United Nations were a Norwegian, Trygve Lie, and a Swede, Dag Hammarskjöld.

[28]Nils Andrén, "Changing Strategic Perspectives in Northern Europe," p. 89. The theory of "cobweb integration" was originally proposed in "Nordic Integration," *Cooperation and Conflict* 2 (1967): 1-25.

[29]Taken from Johan Galtung, *The European Community: A Superpower in the Making* (London: 1973).

[30]Bengt Sundelius, "Nordic Model of Neighborly Cooperation," *Foreign Policies of Northern Europe,* p. 182.

[31]Klaus Rifbjerg, "Strong, but Weak." Paper presented at the Aspen Institute Conference.

[32]*Jag, Jörn Johan Donner, född den 5 februari 1933 i Helsingfors, Finland* (Helsinki: 1980), p. 60. Jörn Donner has headed both the Finnish Film Institute and the Swedish.

[33]Ronald Inglehart and Jacques René Rabier, "Trust Between Nations: Primordial Ties, Societal Learning, and Economic Development." Manuscript submitted to the American Political Science Association, dated April 1983.

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Appendix A—Official Efforts Toward Nordic Unity (Since World War II)

1947 – Customs union proposed between Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.

1948 – Norway rejects customs union.

– Fenno-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance.

– Swedish proposal for Scandinavian Defense Union.

1949 – Denmark and Norway join NATO.

1952 – Nordic Council formed; first session in 1953.

1954 – Common Labor Market Treaty (Iceland signed the convention in 1982).

– Protocol between Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden concerning exemption of nationals of these countries from the obligation to have a passport or Residence Permit while residing in a Scandinavian country other than their own.

1955 – Nordic agreement concerning Social Security.

1956 – Finland becomes a member of the Nordic Council.

1957 – Nordic convention concerning waiver of passport at Intra-Nordic Frontiers (Iceland acceded to the convention in 1965).

1959 – European Free Trade Association founded; Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are members.

1961 – Finland becomes associate member of EFTA.

– First Danish application for membership in EEC.

1962 – First Norwegian application for membership in EEC.

– First Swedish application for association with EEC.

– Treaty of cooperation between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.

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1963 – Finnish President Urho Kekkonen proposes a Nordic nuclear-free zone.

1967 – Second Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish applications to the EEC.

1968 – Danish proposal for a Nordic customs union (NORDEK).

– Agreement on the administration of joint Nordic Assistance Projects in Developing Countries.

1970 – Rejection by Finland of NORDEK.

– Finland hosts SALT 1 talks.

– Iceland joins EFTA.

1971 – Nordic Council of Ministers established as formal entity.

– Treaty of cooperation between the five countries (1962) amended.

– Nordic Treaty concerning cultural cooperation.

– Working Procedure for the Nordic Council.

1972 – Referendums in Denmark and Norway on membership in the EEC.

– Swedish free trade agreement with EEC (operative in 1973).

– Treaty concerning Nordic cooperation in the field of Transport and Communications.

1973 – Denmark joins EEC.

– Finnish trade treaties with COMECON (CMEA) and EEC.

– Norwegian free trade agreement with EEC.

– Agreement and Statutes for a Nordic Fund for Technology and Industrial Development.

– Working Procedure for the Nordic Council of Ministers.

1974 – Convention on the Protection of the Environment between Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

1975 – Agreement on a Nordic Fund for Cultural Purposes.

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– Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held in Helsinki.

1976 – Icelandic free trade agreement and tariff concessions with EEC enter into force.

– The Nordic Investment Bank established.

1977 – Agreement between Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden over regional cooperation in area of national frontiers between local authorities.

– Proposal for inter-Nordic exchange of radio and television programs via satellite (NORDSAT).

1982 – Denmark withdraws from NORDSAT.

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Per Olov Enquist

On the Art of Flying Backward with Dignity

WHEN THE STORM WAS HERE IN JANUARY, it was straight from the west; through my window in Copenhagen you could see the sea gulls sweep by over Sortedamm Circle above the lake; there was a thin, thin layer of steaming water just above the water's surface. Very strong wind; a storm had lain over southern Scandinavia for two days, felling thousands of trees, but here, in central Copenhagen, there were no trees to fell; and I saw the gulls flying toward the storm, struggling resolutely, but still driven backward across my window. When they passed by my window in this way, slowly flying backward, they turned their heads and looked at me, often with a quick, apologetic smile, as if afraid I would find it inappropriate or humiliating for them or improper for gulls to be flying in this manner.

It was a remarkable day: they were driven back very slowly, pressed by strong winds, and their smiles seemed to say, *Our intentions were so good, why is everything going backward?* Or perhaps it meant, *Everything used to go forward, now it's going backward. What's happened? We're fighting just as hard as we were before!* And I felt a strong desire to open the window and say to them, I don't know, I don't have any answers. The art of flying against strong head winds lies in not giving up. You don't give up, you fly with dignity.

But not even in Copenhagen—where, for that matter, the most absurd and feebleminded happenings in the North regularly occur—is it possible to talk to sea gulls. I sat at my worktable going through

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an album with pictures of my parents when they were young, but the pictures didn't match, not with what I'd believed. Days when the gulls are flying backward over Sortedammen and the pictures in the album don't go together—those days are the most interesting. When the sea gulls start to fly backward and we find this normal, it's a sign that the situation is beginning to stabilize.

I forgot to say that I'm quite sure the gulls were Swedish. The storm, on the other hand, I don't know much about.

If you're interested in Sweden, and you're a writer, and you want to describe the case of Sweden, how things happened the way they did and why, you have to realize that Sweden isn't itself, even if it seems to be.

This morning I go through the photographs from home one more time. I've had them sent. Most I've seen before. They're all from northern Västerbotten, where I was born, a thousand kilometers north of Stockholm. Also, there is the old death picture of Papa. He died when I was just six months old, in March of 1935. Big, strong young lumberjack, thirty-two years old, longshoreman in the summer and lumberjack in the winter, and then suddenly he gets a pain in the stomach and dies. Anyway, there's a custom up there in the far north of taking death pictures, pictures of the corpse in the coffin. Some have the bodies lined up on the special bureau, a long row of horizontal people with closed eyes. The caskets look alike, sometimes the corpses too, but not Papa. I was fifteen years old and working that summer at the sawmill the first time I got to see the picture of Papa in the coffin.

It was like seeing yourself. I found the picture in a bunch of other photos, also containing two other pictures of the dead, my mother's mother and my brother—he was strangled at birth by the umbilical cord (you just see a little round mug of a face). But Papa's coffin picture was different. He looked like me, and for a moment I thought it was me and just didn't understand what I was doing in a casket. For a second I thought it was *me* lying there: I remember that I got ice cold, and my heart kept pounding.

Then I saw it was him. It was the nicest picture in the album. It was like seeing yourself, in the future.

Now I live in Copenhagen, and observing Sweden from this point is like looking at pictures in a photograph album: you recognize

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everything, nothing is like it used to be, and everything has qualities of yourself.

For a long time Sweden was the well-behaved member of the Nordic family: the admired one, the one people looked up to, the successful one, the one who always did things first. These last years the attitude has changed: the model is in crisis, criticism is growing, and underneath the criticism is a sort of gloating that no Swede understands, really.

Before everything went forward. Now it's going backward. Why? *Our intentions were so good.*

In Sweden they dreamed of being able to produce the good human being by legislation; or more precisely, of legislating evil out of existence. It was no bad dream created by wicked people. It developed out of a Christian, a Lutheran sense of responsibility: *Am I not my brother's keeper?* The problem arose when the sense of responsibility for one's neighbor drove the society to take too much responsibility away from him: he then lacked responsibility, and the society acquired the power. It was hard to tell where the breaking point came, but someplace it was passed. Now there is constant talk of a Sweden of restrictions.

In the thirties and forties, Sweden was a social experiment that aroused international interest. Today, the example of Sweden is in many quarters condemned, scorned, ridiculed. Such response results from very hasty and, I believe, erroneous conclusions based on a changed situation.

I shall try to present a few images of the contradictory elements in the case of "the Scandinavian model."

In the wee hours of New Year's Day, in Nørrebro, in Copenhagen, we have lights burning everywhere: barricades, fire, stones thrown, shots fired, encounters between groups of young people and police. I've seen young people's rebellions and riots before: I lived in West Berlin at the end of the sixties and the start of the seventies, saw firsthand the rise, fragmentation, and disintegration of the Berlin Left. This, though, is a different youth, a different rebellion. The squatters are there shut up in their incredibly fragile fortresses, but something has changed since 1968. Five days later the battle is decided, though the problem of course is the same.

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The police have won, the occupied buildings were leveled to the ground; inside myself I register a strange relief that I'm actually ashamed of. I *didn't recognize* the uprising. It wasn't my own, wasn't recognizable, wasn't the rebellion of my generation. And the violence wasn't the same as fifteen years ago when I watched at close range the Bader-Meinhof group's breakaway from the rest of the Left in Berlin.

Copenhagen at the start of the eighties: the second youth rebellion, the first planting of the Scandinavian crisis in the earth's crust.

The violence toughens; antagonisms grow acute. And there are terribly unclear political distinctions. For a time, the squatters at Nørrebro had very loyal popular support; but now it's ebbing fast. This Nørrebro, located north of downtown Copenhagen and the only remaining large slum area, fascinating and repulsive, full of guest workers and immigrants and Danish working class, once a classic hotbed of reds in Copenhagen—and now?

A test pattern of the problems of the Scandinavian eighties.

There's a difference between Denmark and Sweden, everybody says. In this area, too. It's true, Nørrebro is different from the Västerbotten of my childhood, with its small farm villages and Lutheran sense of moral duty and devout Christianity. The Nordic countries—an island group starting to crack—differ from one another. The young people's rebellions of the eighties simply don't exist in Sweden. Not yet. But they will come. We tend to be surprisingly late in Sweden, in fact. In 1975 the "slum storm movement" began in Holland, then Italy followed, and in 1980 this strangely elusive youth rebellion existed in such varying countries as West Germany, England, and Denmark. And an increasing number are following after: the potential latitude is great, the movement is young in many ways (sometimes with the fourteen- to sixteen-year-olds predominant). And the class base is what's most disconcerting: whatever are we to call these out-of-work people, punks, ecology activists, druggies, "eighties" hippy equivalents, just hanging out—these children? The new lumpenproletariat, someone has suggested: actually, an unlikely phenomenon in the Scandinavia of the third way—at any rate, unlikely till ten years ago. André Gorz has attempted two definitions: the nonclass of nonworkers or the postindustrial neo-proletariat. A Danish Marxist has launched the term "the third estate."

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I don't know. None of these gets to the crux of this phenomenon of the welfare crisis. I try out the expression "the army of those made unnecessary," but the word "army" gives the impression of organization, marching orders, plus clearly defined resistance. This is lacking here. But the ones made unnecessary are there, and are going to be there in greater and greater numbers.

Fifteen years after the young people's rebellions of the sixties, in other words, comes a new one; but this one appears quite different. The student rebellion that I once found myself in the middle of in West Berlin doesn't have much in common with what I live in the middle of today in Nørrebro in Copenhagen. Something has happened.

That time it was a case of a youth rebellion with a very clearly defined class basis: it was the children of the ruling class who were revolting against belief in authority and outdated educational systems. A rebellion—at any rate, in the European metropolises—with an extraordinarily well-developed theoretical superstructure, and which, moreover, questioned the structure of the entire capitalist society. The rebellion produced an ocean of writings and was very brief, partly because it represented a coming to terms *within* the ruling class. When the whole thing was over, a number of heated and conflicting appraisals would be made of what actually happened, which was self-evident, since the participants came from a class that was in the habit of expressing itself. The shortest—and perhaps also most significant—assessment I saw very recently, in a Danish article about a person who had just got an important job as head of a bank. In the long list of qualifications, immediately after "work in the World Bank" but before "UN service," was included the additional qualification, "two years in the student revolution." After this phase of professional accomplishment, he simply moved up to assume his dominant post in the central administration, occupying his natural position in the hierarchy—that is, the top.

The rebellion of the sixties was an offshoot of the economic upswing, a structural break made possible by the 1900s belief in progress at its peak, just before the curve fell off. Of course, even the sixties doomsday prophets thundering their loudest have a remarkable undertone of confidence: the revolution will be a thundering hell, says this confidence, *but it will be*. The change is inevitable: and this faith in progress mirrors the trust that a great number of Europe-

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an industrial countries have in any case harbored. The rebellion of the eighties appears to be of another kind. The class base, to begin with, is quite different. Now we see the lumpenproletariat of crisis and decline with rocks in hand, little interested in social-democratic dreams of building the strong society, in concepts such as "solidarity" or "equality," in rebelling against fathers—since they were never given any authority; a lumpenproletariat without hope, since no one ever convinced them that hope exists, either for work or leisure; finally, uninterested in the choice between revolution and a long march through institutions, since they have scarcely read any books, and the institutions belong to a different class: the educated, the ruling forces.

Since hope and utopia were never articulated for them, they are neither hopeless nor disappointed. They are nothing. Many people within the Left tend to get in a bad mood over exactly this *apolitical* element of the eighties rebellion—or the openly reactionary aspects of it. A few individuals in the rebellion who are interested in ecology or social issues seem to be going along hand in hand with a very large number of unpolitical types, populists or Glistrup kids: uneducated, unemployed, rightist anarchists, and antiunion youngsters who view every organization as an enemy—or else with punks and skinheads and junkies and religious mystics and God knows what all.

Of course, what unites all these disparate political positions is quite simply the fundamental physical needs—food, warmth, clothing, sex, and survival—as well as the knowledge that none of them will ever get to be part of a favored majority, or get an education or a job.

They belong to the new Scandinavian countersociety, a basically new phenomenon in a world based upon the notion of *a society we are with,* not against. It is a countersociety that's growing, and is going to keep on growing, especially considering that unemployment is structural and increasing and that the army of those made unnecessary is a part of it.

So these autumn days of 1983 I walk around the Nørrebro that may be the part of the Scandinavian eighties to be clarified first, and I don't really know if I make a good witness. But to myself I try to define the points that nevertheless serve to describe this hard-to-define and utterly un-Scandinavian movement, which may contain a bit of the future Scandinavian world.

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What is it that makes me so aggressive?

First of all, the rebellion of the eighties is lacking in ideological motivation. The army of those made unnecessary is definitely not made up of anticapitalists, and most of them have no idea what Marxism is. The rebellion is not based on a theory; rather, it expresses itself mutely, at best in graffiti. Most of them tend to view any attempt at articulation as a trap, every interpretation as attempted ambush. It is a question of an emotional movement, unlike the intellectual one of the sixties, leading a number of people to talk about a new base for fascism, which still, no doubt, is missing the point.

Second, it is illustrative rather than analytical. It doesn't protest against injustice, displeasure, underprivilege, or unemployment. It expresses all this through violence, passivity, apathy, destruction, through the movement's irrationality rather than its force of verbal expression. Moreover, it lacks leadership. Leadership and leader types may emerge, but these are certainly not the main tendency, which essentially is anarchistic.

The fundamental emotional base, the lowest common denominator of feeling, is anxiety. Anxiety for the future (so strikingly divergent from the fifties' *trust* I grew up in), anxiety for violence, for unemployment, for pollution, decay, war, and devastation. It answers this anxiety not through analysis, organization, or work—which would be the normal Swedish social-democratic model—but through feelings, disorganization, flight, violence. It expresses its anxiety metaphorically, so to speak, transforming its life into a metaphor: others will have to interpret or verbalize this metaphor.

It writes a poem about its anxiety, but without words, only through its bearing on life.

The movement is clearly antistatist, antigovernment: it derives its ideological premises from the anarchism of the late 1800s, even if it's doubtful that a single one of them ever heard of either Bakunin or Herzen. The state is their enemy, they don't want to have anything to do with it; they just want to live in peace. Unlike their more purposeful predecessors, however, they don't express themselves through terror, little murders, or assassination attempts; the distancing from the oppressive state occurs rather by means of escape.

Hence, they have undertaken *total mutiny.*

And what is the basic pattern? The only philosophy it expresses is pessimism. "Yesterday we were standing at the edge of the abyss.

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Today we've come a step closer." Submerged in this pessimism, they find that they survive, even in the Scandinavian eighties that do not resemble my own fifties. But they would rather spend this survival in an autonomous zone that they've created themselves, rather than in solidarity with the "society." Thus they express a change of attitude that is not only marginal. In the forties, every Swedish schoolchild learned to think, *"l'état, c'est nous."* It was the basic social-democratic ideology that not only paved the way for solidarity with the weak, but also made possible the world's highest tax burden—borne, moreover, without grumbling.

But nobody anymore thinks we are the state.

Where I go walking through the Nørrebro of the eighties, I see not only the slums, the taken-over buildings, the masses of disqualified or runaway youths; I see also a significant change in my society. Twenty years ago the question was *how* we could change the future; today there's the suspicion that we don't *have* any future. There was an attack, then, against the prevailing powers; now there is a lack of interest, flight.

Sometimes I tell myself that the problem is private: I'm just a middle-aged, hibernating sixties type who doesn't see the prospects for a new vision of resistance. It's a consoling, fervent hope: it's not, then, a budding fascism we're seeing, but a new and softer society that will find room for the army of those made unnecessary. When the dream of permanent growth ended and the realization of permanent decline became clear, the phenomenon of decline also became visible. The children of crisis are ours, even if we don't like them.

There is in every age, and in every society, a certain "of course" that is accepted completely during a certain period. This "of course" can be introduced into a number of statements: for example, that social democracy is of course the lackey of capitalism (from the early seventies); that of course "we are the state" (from the forties, as I said); and so on.

If you were to search for an "of course" in Sweden's public debate of autumn 1983, it would most certainly be, "Of course, Sweden is *förbudsstat* (a nation of restrictions). Or *förmyndarsamhälle* (a guardian society). This "of course" expresses a common opinion, one that develops suddenly, as a view shared in public discourse, and perhaps just as suddenly disappears. The "of course" of 1983 speaks

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of the crisis of the strong state, of the people's weariness with restrictions, of their revolt against state power. It is the "of course" of new anarchism.

Are there really so terribly many restrictions in Sweden? I'm not sure. In every society you see the restrictions you aren't used to. By the lake in Copenhagen where I live, there is a sign that says "Keep Off the Ice," which is normal in a country that has few lakes; this is certainly not the case for Sweden, where instead it would have said "Warning: Thin Ice." In West Berlin near the Havelsee, I read "*Schwimmen ist für Nichtschwimmer strengt verboten,*" a deeply philosophical maxim, indicating that the prohibition of what you *don't* know how to do eases the pain of inability ("Work Is Strictly Prohibited to the Unemployed"). On the street below me is a turnaround drive; in the middle of it stands a sign that says, "Parking on Turnaround Strictly Prohibited." The sign not only makes parking there physically impossible, but also, and regrettably, turning around, itself—demonstrating the efficiency of the prohibitive sign. Anybody who has ever seen this sign or others like it understands much of how Danish domestic policy works.

I see the restrictions in Denmark, Germany, or the United States easily. In Sweden I didn't see them. Suddenly Sweden is beginning to see its own restrictions. The weariness of restrictions exists there, and expresses an interesting change of attitude in our relationship to the exercise of authority: it's seen in many areas; perhaps it is a part of the very interesting intellectual current that could be called European neo-anarchism. But basically it's a symptom of the crisis of the Swedish model. Or, the crisis of the power machinery, the conflict between the caretaking attitude and the one demanding personal responsibility. In short: a reaction to the dilemma that arises when the government apparatus that social democracy once developed to defend the weak—those without rights or power—almost without anyone taking notice, is seized by love of self and power, and begins to expand.

Sometimes it's advantageous to select a peripheral area of society in order to illustrate its central problems: anybody who wants to understand this Swedish dilemma, for example, may do well to take a look at the traffic policy in Stockholm. There we find the madhouse depicted with exceptional clarity—but also the reaction to it.

We find the model; the administrative machinery can be seen.

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Yet, what kind of model for society are we observing?—all these bridges leading in toward Stockholm, these approach roads intended to bring cars to the inner city, where they are then chased like rats and punished, not because cars are not wanted, or because the fines produce a surplus (Stockholm Municipal Services, with its multitudinous parking meters, and its giant army of meter maids and police, is a money-losing operation), or in order to accomplish what the traffic policy in other capital cities is striving for; no, in Stockholm things are different. The traffic policy seems intended for something else, to teach a *lesson;* to instill in the human being the idea of the supremacy of the ruling and penalizing forces, the presence of the hierarchical system, the proximity of the state. In no other country in the world are these peculiar protective bodies so terribly developed, and with such clear ideological intent: the penalty as moral lesson. By imposing a permanently present screen of *punishment* over the individual's everyday life, he is reminded that the state exists, that authority wields power, and that the human being is subject to this state.

What is remarkable is not merely that these intrinsically odd patterns of punishment are laid so close together (so close, that today no parking space on the streets of Stockholm is without its meter), or that the number of employees in these protective bodies and penal units has grown by leaps and bounds in the last ten years, or that the whole operation, this whole Kafkaesque superstructure, is operating at a loss, or that the organization has been given a paramilitary character, with capture strategies, pincer movements, towaways, and battle-type campaigns—no, what is remarkable is the silent, patient, quiet resignation—the submission—that for so long has made all this possible—though not anymore. Something has happened.

It's possible that there is no such thing as a "national character." There is, however, no doubt that patterns of acquired values-learned reactions exist, together with a great societal "of course" that sooner or later leaves its imprint on all areas. The Swedish "of course" concerning the question of the quality of life is especially interesting. I imagine that this "of course" (in a remark that begins, "Quality of life, of course, means . . .") differs considerably from that of other societies. For example, we tend to choose "purity" rather than "warmth," to choose value words that in themselves mean not only a reduction of life's dirt, but also its warmth. And for a long time this

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basic value, this "of course," sped Swedish society on a road that led to a very high quality of life. But on this long climb, there was a breaking point at which something got lost. It was good to dream of breathing life's pure air, so long as you didn't forget that you also were supposed to *live* in this pure air. And life sometimes involves dirt: this is the painful paradox. You don't get closeness and warmth among people in a thoroughly organized, sterilized world.

Despite this fact, air-conditioned prison cells with flowers and works of art and fresh-painted white walls are frequently criticized for their lack of *actual* quality of life, by ungrateful, shortsighted inmates who have noticed one little detail: the door is closed. They have such a strange, multifaceted outlook on the concept of quality of life.

Sweden is no locked cell, but the problem is principally the same. The pictures in my father's old album show a Swedish lumberjack in the thirties; usually he's sitting on lawns, under arbors, almost always dressed in neat black apparel, sometimes with an absurd little bow tie under his chin. He looks annoyingly proper, almost a bit fashionable—it doesn't really agree with the image inside me of my prematurely dead young longshoreman-and-lumberjack father. Actually, it's only the picture of him dead that I really like. I look at it for a long while. Outside my window are gulls flying backward and behind me is this dilapidated Nørrebro with all its junkies and squatters and everything; round about me are several Scandinavian countries that have been built on the old social-democratic notion of permanent growth, and that now stand facing permanent decline, at a loss over what to do; and it strikes me that my stubborn staring into my father's old album expresses something that's probably not unique to me: the bewilderment and longing to go back to the Holy Land.

Swedes have actually only one religious belief, which is basically Zionistic: they live in a diaspora in their big new cities and dream of returning to the Holy Land, the small farmer towns they once came from. We're all *bonntjyvar* (country con artists) in the diaspora, a friend of mine once wrote in a letter. I was doubtful then, but there's something to it. Back to Papa on the lawn in Hjoggböle, with the coffee cup in front of him and an indecorous urchin's twinkle in his eye: that's what we want to go back to. *One day we will all return;*

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the voices of captives rise skyward in chorus in the crisis of the eighties.

But we can never return, of course. We can only live where we live. And only write about it, which unfortunately we almost don't do.

I doubt that the social experiment called Scandinavia has ever been in a more interesting, more dramatic, more crucial phase than it is now. But in literature we're not dealing with it. We're writing about the picture of Papa dead. We're sitting in exile in Hallonbergen or Rosersberg or Nørrebro, and the exile surrounds us and fills our lungs; but we're writing about Papa's death picture. We are also writing about the woodcutter on the grass in his neat black suit because the roots to our societies are there, and the roots to ourselves. But there is something fundamentally strange about a literature that resembles a tree whose crown consists of roots pointing to the sky: the roots visible, but the green treetop deep down in the ground.

Yesterday I walked across a lot where they're tearing down a building at Sorte Firkanten and entered a back courtyard; two young squatters immediately came up and asked what I was doing there. I suppose they assumed I was a plainclothes policeman. I said I was a writer. Then they asked me to get out, which I did, since I also was afraid and took it that if I didn't, I would get a bicycle chain in my face. It was a perfectly normal situation: I introduced myself as a writer, and they asked me to leave.

I suppose that they believed me and *for this reason* asked me to get lost, go to hell, move my ass and get out. Maybe they saw something. But something has changed since the Swedish proletarian writers of the thirties had their breakthrough.

Papa would never have asked a writer to go to hell. On the other hand, he never met a living writer in all his life: north of the Dala River, they were as uncommon as oak trees. Besides, the society he lived in was clearly much more like what Swedish society used to be. What is most interesting about Swedish society today is that it's unlike itself. No society in the world today is more unlike itself than the Swedish one, which makes it easy to tell it apart from all the others.

Actually, this unlikeness creates a very sharp, clear identity: a knife-sharp, painfully present contour in the face of the society whose image I'm always trying to put down on paper.

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I forgot one thing, which complicates the picture. Several years ago I wrote a novel called *Musikanternas uttåg (The Exit of the Musicians),* a novel about my own background and about a family in the north of Sweden at the turn of the century. This book has a second part that's still not written: it deals with the same family's emigration to Argentina in 1910. Two thousand laborers from Norrbotten went off to Brazil and Argentina; within a year, half of them died in the jungle of disease and epidemics, some returned, and a few hundred stayed.

They're still there, in Misiones; I visited them and lived there awhile. They *språkade* a Swedish that was like an old Bible translation, and lived the way they did at the turn of the century, scarcely any better. They loved their Swedish heritage. They kept asking how things were in Sweden. I couldn't answer them, since I hardly had the answer they could understand.

Much later, since I've returned and because this unwritten second part remains unwritten, I realize what I've seen. The disaster in the jungle where they died, or fell destitute, developed from a paradigm that was the opposite image of Swedish society: it was the ultimate consequence of the notion of man being alone, of organizational attempt being impossible or meaningless, of people being their own enemy. The Sweden that they left picked the opposite path, that of total organization, and now lives in another sort of dilemma. The images of the two alternatives are each other's postulates, just as the light of the negative becomes the dark of the picture. If the images are put together at a certain spot, at some point in the grain, there is an answer, a possible solution.

Maybe that is what the sea gulls over Sortedammen are trying to tell me: it's harder to fly slowly backward than forward. It demands much more—of people, as of gulls. It's easy to sulk, lose composure, grow desperate. Then all is lost. But the dilemma of gradual retreat actually makes us face far more important existential problems than those of slow progress.

And so I smile back at my backward-flying friends, the gulls, and whisper: Hold out. Fly with dignity. It's being decided right now, all of it. Hold out.

Translated by Verne Moberg

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Hans L. Zetterberg

The Rational Humanitarians

EVENTS IN ONE COUNTRY have sometimes signaled what is in store for others many years in the future. The establishment of independence and democracy in the United States, for example, foreshadowed by a hundred years or more what was to come to the continent of Europe and to other European colonies. In searching today for the land of tomorrow, attention has sometimes focused on the Nordic countries, and on Sweden in particular. There, by a combination of circumstances much as in the case of the United States—including a measure of isolation from major wars, relative prosperity, and high literacy—social structures emerged that seem to be in the cards for other developed countries.

During the Great Depression, Marquis Childs argued in *Sweden—The Middle Way*[1] that the synthesis between capitalism and socialism which Sweden had achieved was in the mainstream of history. The same trends were thought to be present in other countries; in Sweden, however, they had not only been developing for a longer period of time, but the circumstances there were particularly favorable to their growth. The trends were not necessarily measured in simple statistics of wealth, production, and welfare, but rather represented both new ways for basic cultural values to be realized and new arrangements between man and his fellowman and between public roles and private pursuits—in short, a new social order. Willy Brandt and Bruno Kreisky, who had spent the years of the Second World War in Scandinavia, brought the Swedish model to the Continent, not to copy it uncritically but to hold it up for inspiration. The Swedes, for their part, began to believe that they were indeed a mod-

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el, as was apparent in their rhetoric and in their diplomatic and aid missions to the Third World.

In today's international debate, Sweden is no longer presented as a model to emulate; rather, it is held up—particularly in Finland, West Germany, and increasingly in France—as a warning. At international symposia on economic and political problem-solving, delegates from the left now look to Austria as the land of promise, and those from the right, to Switzerland. Sweden nonetheless remains a bellwether state, early to show what is coming and thereby a good warning.

THE OLD BREED

Sven Svensson lives in a middle-sized city in middle Sweden. He is the Swedish Archie Bunker. He is middle-aged, earns an average income, and is the quintessential middle-of-the-roader in a nation of joiners.

Like other mainstream Swedes, Sven has an uncommonly strong affinity for security (*trygghet*). He was brought up with the rectitude of the temperance movement, to which his father belonged. He is rather intolerant of any who do not share his values, and looks askance at the strange customs of the immigrants from Southern Europe who have flooded into Sweden, and whose darker coloring makes them stand out from the paler Swedes. Sven takes care not to draw attention to himself through deportment or attire.

Sven is uncomfortable with deviation even in the form of excellence and prominence. In his habit of belittling other Swedes who have won recognition for their accomplishments, Sven manifests the reputed "royal Swedish envy." For safety, Sven sticks to an unwritten code: "Keep your place! Don't think you are somebody! Live as others do and think as others do!" He shuns extremes of behavior in word or deed. In Sven's opinion, only people under the influence of alcohol or drugs or who are otherwise unaccountable display such conduct. To suit Sven, emotions should be well under control and come in easily digestible bite-size portions. At meetings, Sven expresses himself in a manner that is unquestionably earnest and sober. No one could ever accuse him of being flighty.

Sven has worked for the same insurance company all his life, and has now reached the rank of supervisor. He is content with his career: working in the same place gives him a sense of continuity, and

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he feels secure in a large, well-established organization. He is a loyal employee, punctual and conscientious.

He votes with the Social Democrats and cannot imagine himself doing otherwise, even if some of the Party's proposals leave him cold. Economic growth is self-evident and unproblematic for Sven; the major—in fact, the *only*—problem is the equitable distribution of the benefits from this growth. The cornerstone of his party loyalty is precisely the egalitarian stance of social democracy.

Sven's wife Anna is considered to be a pillar of strength in the neighborhood of comfortable apartment houses where they have lived all their married life. When their three children were small, she remained at home to take care of them, but she has now gone back to her part-time (twenty-eight hours a week) job at a check-out counter in the local cooperative department store. A dual income is essential for the average Swedish life. The extra income enables her to buy new clothes now and then—nothing extravagant or flashy of course—to keep up with the other Svenssons. It also enables Anna and Sven to make improvements on their modest summer home located a few miles away, which they bought twenty years ago and where they always spend their vacations.

The Svenssons pay 40 percent of their combined income in taxes. About half of Sven's paycheck is deducted for income tax, but because the incomes of husband and wife are not added together for tax purposes (except for the special tax on capital and property), Anna, who earns less than Sven, can keep more of her wages. So Anna's job means a great deal in terms of cash. Prices are rather high; a value-added tax of about 25 percent is included in the tag on all items they buy. The Svenssons honestly hate inflation.

The Svenssons admit that taxes are high, but they hasten to point out that they get a lot in return: pensions, medical care, dental care, nursing homes. Their grandchildren, they add, will receive subsidized day care and free schooling—including textbooks—and will be able to attend college without paying tuition fees. Old enough to remember the economic struggles of an earlier generation, the Svenssons feel they are well off and in a real sense fortunate.

Both the Svenssons are fond of tradition. Every Thursday Anna serves pea soup with pork and pancakes. Christmas is a sacrosanct family holiday, when her mother and Sven's father join them to feast on the invariable Yuletide ham, meatballs, and many other dishes

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that Anna has spent days preparing. Her Christmas table is a "supersmorgasbord."

The stagnant climate of opinion in the world of the Svenssons is hardly conducive to new ideas and directions or hospitable to multiplicity and diversity. These have been sacrificed for the security that predictability and control afford. Sven and Anna would counter, however, that they prefer an orderly state of affairs to one torn by conflict. They would never view order and conformity as encumbrances, for these, they believe, are virtues that are an end in themselves. Sven would respond with righteous indignation to the suggestion that his mental outlook might stultify diversity and originality. He would point out that his Party has always stood for reforms and on the side of the weak against the powerful and wealthy. The ideology of his Party extols such principles as freedom and an open exchange of ideas as well as solidarity and equality. But the freedom and openness Sven pays such ardent lip service to must be on his terms, within his normative frame of reference—*and he cannot see the contradiction.*

The Svenssons care about their family and relatives, although they do not always show they do. They hide a hurt realization that their grown children do not spend as much time with them as they themselves did with their parents. They can talk about the weaker bond between the generations, but it is unthinkable to them that it might have something to do with the stipends they received from the government to help raise their children. Welfare benefits improve the quality of contacts between generations, they say. You don't have to talk about money all the time.

"To belong" is the Svenssons' imperative. He and others like him constitute the infantry of the large voluntary associations, the traditional popular movements—the labor movement, the free church movement, athletic organizations, and so on. But he is suspicious of the new movements—the environmentalists, women's lib, the peace movement. He belongs to a life-style grouping that we call "the Group-Faithful." If their numbers today are compared with all other life-style groupings combined, they would be a minority of the Swedish population, but they make up the single largest life-style cluster in the country. They appear to be on the decline, but their values and attitudes still permeate the Swedish climate of opinion.

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Needless to say, the Svenssons owe much of their dominance to the Social Democrats. For forty-four years, from 1932 to 1976, the country was governed by the Svenssons *for* the Svenssons. The only major deviations from the Svenssons' credo that the Social Democrats stood for were international concerns, the liberal treatment of immigrants, and generous leaves to imprisoned criminals.

The Svenssons feel a strong loyalty to what they call "the real Sweden"—that is, the country populated by their own kind. They would defend the country vigorously by military means, every far-flung region of it, and in their view, the high defense costs of armed neutrality are worthwhile. They distrust the Russians very much. They feel warm toward the Americans, but they do not love America, except perhaps its technology. They do not consider themselves to be Europeans, and do not wish their country to have full membership in the European Community.

THE NEW BREED

Mikael Karlsson is a twenty-nine-year-old sales engineer in Stockholm. He wears a three-piece corduroy suit to work. The mortgage on his semidetached house affords him a sizable income tax deduction. He does not smoke, but when offered pot for the first time at a party recently, he decided to try it. He owns a new stereo, a long double-breasted leather coat, and an old boat that he is in the process of outfitting. He has a friend who is trying to run his motorboat on methane gas. Together they sometimes play with the idea of using bacteria to extract gas from the marsh close to the friend's summer cottage. Mikael doesn't mind the economic risks of the project, but he is reluctant to enter into such far-reaching and demanding enterprises.

Mikael no longer buys *Aftonbladet*, the Social-Democratic evening paper. Instead, he subscribes to a boating magazine. He questions the merits of his well-paid but high-pressure job. He has told his wife that he thinks two children are absolutely enough. His mother lives alone in an apartment a half-hour's drive from Mikael's house, but he visits her only once a month at most. Somehow he feels that by paying his taxes, he is absolved of responsibility to other generations and to the needy.

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Unlike many of his co-workers, Mikael doesn't participate in his company's savings plan that gives tax breaks to those who do. He is not strongly committed to any political party, and speaks of politics disparagingly and without involvement. He looks upon his union dues—which, along with his withholding taxes, are deducted from his paycheck—as a kind of tax. One political question that *does* interest him is the shortening of working hours, an issue that during the seventies was of more interest to women than to men.

Mikael Karlsson finds patriotic talk slightly ridiculous. He does not love Sweden. He loves the archipelago, and if he ever moved abroad, he would return every year to summer there. Seen in a global perspective, he lives a short distance from Leningrad but has never been there, and he never thinks of it. When anyone talks about big cities, he thinks of London and New York. We gather that he was greatly alarmed by the Soviet submarine activity in his beloved archipelago, but this happened after our interviews with him.

Sven Svensson and Mikael Karlsson do not exist in the real world: rather, they are composites fashioned from in-depth interviews in 1978 with large samples of the kind used by public opinions pollsters.

It may be noted in passing that the Mikael of 1978 is different not only from the Old Breed of Svenssons, but also from the student revolutionaries of 1968. He is not drawn toward the solidarity and fellowship of a collective but to a small, rather selfish circle. Unlike the back-to-nature enthusiasts, he does not wish to return to an earlier tried-and-true type of technology on the community level, but wants to practice instead new, small-scale technologies on a large economic scene. Unlike the radical Left, he does not want to transform society; at most he wants to change or at least experiment with himself. Yet, in other ways, he is similar to his 1968 counterpart; he is retreating from the emphasis on achievement and competition, and he accepts emotions, wants to employ all of his senses, and is willing to take some risks. As a person, Mikael Karlsson listens much more to inner signals than does Sven Svensson, who is guided more by external cues.

Mikael Karlsson represents a common problem to his employer, especially on those occasions when he must work overtime and shoulder some responsibility. Old rewards such as promotions and

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raises only work with Mikael when he sees something intrinsically appealing for himself in them: he wants a job in which he can develop as a person.

In politics, of course, almost anything can happen. But the best guess is that—in Sweden—the final quarter of this century will belong to the Karlssons in the same way that the mid-century belonged to the Svenssons. This means that the emphasis on equality in Swedish politics will give way to an emphasis on freedom.

The increasing predominance of Mikael's type is a problem to politicians—particularly those on the left—because he places individual interests before collective interests. Apolitical types such as Mikael are easily drawn into the antitax, antiunion, antigovernment protests of the eighties. Yet, one cannot help but be concerned about his apathy toward the large issues of this decade: the cost of the welfare state; the problem of retired persons and providing for the aged; the problems associated with an overwhelmingly large public sector; the temptation to resort to protectionism and self-sufficiency; the conflict between the demands of national democracy and the demands of union democracy (which loom large in Mikael's country); the issue of defense against the ever-present urge among superpowers to put small nations under their "protection"; and, not least, the threat of fascism.[2] If Mikael and his kind prevail, politicians will to a large extent be left to solve problems in peace. If so, the eighties will be a decade lacking in vigorous political participation, despite prodigious political problems that clamor for far-reaching political changes.

Mikael Karlsson in profile was presented in lectures in Norway and Finland, and to symposia in Tokyo and Zurich. The reaction was the same everywhere: he may be a typical young Swede, but he is also very much like young Norwegians, Finns, Japanese, Swiss, . . . Daniel Yankelovich said that Mikael Karlsson is practically an American.

Values and fashions apparently vibrate through all the modern industrial democracies with their interconnected media. What we had thought was typical of a country was, with minor exceptions, typical of a time. And there was little reason to assume that the Mikael of Stockholm was a more developed specimen than his counterparts in other countries. The modern Swede is not a precursor of the modern man. At best, the Nordic scene provides him with a unique setting in which the modern social drama can be played with different accents and in a different light.

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THE PERIPHERY

What has been said so far is based on opinion and value research in Sweden. To find the more unique and basic aspects of the Nordic mentality, we have to turn to history.

European history has two axes. The first—and for us, the most important—has to do with ideas and values such as rationality and humanitarianism, and moved from south to north. The intellectual sources of our culture are to be found around the Mediterranean: Athens, Rome, and Jerusalem. The ideas and values in our culture spread northward from Rome, Florence, and Venice. The Alps were in the way, but the values passed to the west of them and formed a cultural center in Paris. They traveled to the east, too, and formed another center in Vienna. Between Paris and Vienna, an arc of lovely cities—Strasbourg, Bruges, Cologne, Constance, Salzburg, and many others—flourished. This intellectual and cultural legacy then spread northward to the British Isles and, with time, to the Nordic regions.

The Nordic countries are located at the periphery. The Mediterranean civilization's cultural legacy was late in reaching this region and gained only a superficial foothold. The Reformation was an attempt to give an independent Central European identity to the currents of ideas traveling from south to north. Significantly, Sweden's highly intellectual Queen Kristina (1626-89) was unwilling to accept such peripheral placement, so she converted and moved from Stockholm to Rome.

The other axis in European history went from east to west. Here lay the key to commercial development. Of course, the lion's share of all commerce has always been local, but a good deal of long-distance trading has also occurred. On balance, European commerce traveled from east to west. Venetian merchants traded with their Islamic counterparts along the old trade routes of the Mediterranean. Goods from the Orient followed the Danube and Rhine from Constantinople. Salt was transported from Salzkammergut. Considerable commerce moved from the Baltic countries to the countries of the North Sea. In the northern half of Europe, grain, timber, potash, charcoal, and hemp moved from the underdeveloped east to the commercially developed west. Sweden contributed copper, iron, and herring to this trade. This commerce led to the accumulation of great riches. At the center of this northern trade pattern lay Copenhagen, which, in the past as well as the present, was the undisputed capital of the Nordic

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region. The wealth that accrued from trade became concentrated in the Hanseatic cities, in Antwerp, and later in London. Here, the material base for European expansion in the world was built up, and the capital that would finance the industrialization of Europe accumulated. Industrialization later spread from west to east—in the direction opposite to that of the trade of old. Alfred Nobel, the first and foremost of the Nordic industrialists to operate on a multinational scale, made much of his fortune in Russia.

The enormous importance of east-west connections in European history throws the existence today of an iron curtain in the middle of Europe into stark relief. The iron curtain would seem to be a singular episode in our history. Today, Finland, because of its history, is the only country of the West that has a historically normal volume of east-west trade. (The Soviet Union, however, has mainly energy to offer to its trading partners—oil, nuclear power plants, natural gas—thereby putting east-west commerce out of balance.)

The parts of Europe that were untouched by commerce and industrialization retain many of their original values, for example, rural Ireland in Catholic Europe and isolated parts of Norway in Protestant Europe, and it is in these areas that we find a concentration of old-fashioned religious values. Changes in mentality are effected most easily in peripheral areas where commerce and industry flourish. Here, we find the most recent and superficial inroads into the old leading values of Europe and, at the same time, strong commercial-industrial forces that either import values or create them, or both. Denmark and Sweden are such areas.

Norway has traditionally been the periphery of Denmark; Finland, of Sweden. Norway and Finland thus are the genuine peripheries in European cultural and commercial development. (Finland, of course, is also on the periphery of Russia.) The divide in Nordic history runs between Sweden-Finland on the one hand, and Denmark-Norway on the other. (The union of Norway and Sweden, which lasted from 1814 to 1905, is an anomaly in Nordic history.)

The periphery has its special charms. It retains old modes and reshapes them into near-novelties. For example, there is such a thing as the Finnish tango. The dance that originated in Argentina and swept across Europe before the First World War, and returned with an echo after the Second, thereafter to die out, has endured in the outskirts of Norden, where it has been adapted, given Finnish lyrics, and imbued

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with Finnish *sisu*. Couples in other parts of Scandinavia gyrate to disco and hard rock. In Finland, they also glide to the contained passion of the tango. Tango music, melancholy and suggestive of a longing never consummated, is decades removed from rock. And while dancers to a rock band lead separate and equal lives as they dance it is the male who is undisputed master in the Finnish tango.

But let us turn to more central values and their realization in the northern periphery of Europe.

RATIONALISM

The civilization of the West has two outstanding themes, both of which are thoroughly entrenched in the Nordic countries: rationalism and humanitarianism. The defeat of Nazi Germany clinched their ascendancy, for Hitler was the incarnation of both unreason and disregard for human dignity. In Sweden, rationalism has long dominated the climate of opinion. A pious Swede is often ashamed of admitting his allegiance to God, while a rationalist Swede is not at all shy about admitting his to Reason. Irrational expressions, ranging from official Church doctrine about hell to the private mysticism of Dag Hammarskjöld's diaries, are often looked upon with skepticism and even suspicion. Rationalism permeates the content of radio and television programs and the editorial and opinion pages of the large newspapers. Political discourse often resembles seminars on economics, political science, and sociology. Political debate in Sweden deals primarily with technical questions. In his book *The Problem of Democracy,* Herbert Tingsten characterized the debate of the 1950s in these words:

> Differences of opinion arise primarily over assumptions which have to be made regarding the development of the economy and the likely consequences of decisions taken. For example: Will there be a depression in the United States? What course will international commodity prices take? Do increased prices for agricultural products mean that the standard of living of the farmers will be unreasonably raised or does it simply mean that they will receive reasonable compensation? How much should wages be raised to compensate for what is lost through inflation, and how much inflation can be permitted in the interest of full employment? In what way can everyone be assured a suitable basic pension?[3]

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A democratic debate over issues like these is a debate among rational experts, and the solutions proposed have the appearance of applied social science. Gone are the rabble-rousing, folksy, electioneering politicians; enter the technocrat with his briefcase of statistics and research reports and his academic degree. In the same fashion, the daring, intuitive business entrepreneur is replaced by the expert in planned and programmed expansion, and the clergyman who surrenders to holy mysticism is replaced by the one who treats Christianity as a sensible blueprint for a good life in a good society.

According to Weber, rationality is a double star steering the course of history: the multiplicity in human thought is organized into systems; the vast repertoire of human behavior is organized into unified institutions. The former means, among other things, that rationality secularizes religions, demystifies nature, breaks the spell cast by art, exposes the secrets of magic, and demasks power. The latter means, among other things, that rationality routinizes everyday life, organizes working life, ritualizes spiritual life, calculates business life, and pushes governments into bureaucracy.

The Swedish version of rationality does not have the clean stringency of its French counterpart, the pragmatic touch of the British intelligence, or the German rationalist's energetic pursuit of perfect solutions. It is marked more by moderation than by logic driven to its final conclusion. Its key word is (the untranslatable) *lagom,* which means both "reasonable" and "middle-road." This stance is akin to the British commonsense rationalism that views abstractions as something foreign. If Sweden ever becomes fully socialized, it will achieve its socialism by rational negotiations leading to middle-of-the-road positions, not by revolutionary doctrines propagated by intellectuals.

There are, of course, short-term fluctuations in the trend toward Swedish rationality. The fifties saw an increase in rationalism; the seventies experienced a rise in anti-intellectualism, made manifest in an increased interest in New Age astrology and oriental mysticism, and in unreasonable fears of computers, nuclear energy, use of pesticides, and so on. In the seventies, some policies were adopted in Sweden to avoid events that are improbable by rational analysis. But in the main, Sweden remains a nation in which rationalism is a pervasive cultural theme.

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The Swedes' explicit faith in their version of rationality has become wedded to an implicit faith in their regulatory structures. Ever since the reign of Gustav Vasa in the sixteenth century, Swedes have had a strong centralized government; and since the regime of Gustavus Adolphus and his chancellor and administrative genius, Axel Oxenstierna, in the seventeenth, they have tended to regard bureaucracy as reason and, therefore, justice incarnate. The country's present-day bureaucracy is still viewed as a more supreme embodiment of justice than the mortals who govern and are governed. As Michael Maccoby observes in *The Leader*, "Today Swedes distrust leaders and have rejected the old patriarchal model, but the rules have become the rulers; technique is authority."[4] Rules are also more in concurrence with the Swedes' distrust of human passions. A rule cannot in itself be capricious, greedy, or evil, and is therefore to be preferred to the unpredictable human factor. A rule is closest to the ideal of pure reason; man's function is to carry it out to the letter.

In the not too distant past, Sweden was primarily a nation of farmers. In contrast to the Danish peasantry, however, Swedish farmers were "free" and not the subjects of feudal lords. They had a good deal of say in the estate *riksdag* and did not have to assume the adversary position toward governmental powers that the Danes and the farmers of the Continent did. The Swedes were more inclined to believe that the government, its legislative decrees, and its functionary extensions generally acted in the best interests of the people. This legacy has carried over into modern times. Swedish speech habits tend to make little or no distinction between "the state" and "society," a blurring that was evident in Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson's 1929 vision of the "People's Home," and that persists in the notion that societal reforms are essentially reforms enacted by the state.

Compliance with laws and regulations may be viewed not so much as an act of obedience as an act of self-interest, but one that is also in the interest of all concerned. There are, of course, those who attempt to manipulate the system to obtain extra subsidies or cheat on their income tax, for example, but the majority of Swedes comply with their system. In 1983 close to 80 percent of a sample of Swedes interviewed by the Swedish Institute for Opinion Research said that they considered reporting too low an income on income tax statements as constituting a rather serious or very serious crime.

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An absence of skepticism toward regulation and control is also revealed by the Swedes' acceptance of "Personal Identification Numbers." Each person living in Sweden is given such a number, which consists of one's birth date plus four other digits. It appears on all kinds of records: tax, bank, hospital, university, national health insurance office, dentist's, police, and social agency records. It appears on your order slip to a mail order house, on check blanks, magazine subscriptions, driver's license, optician's order form, on your application for a charge card or an adult education course—among innumerable other places. It is as omnipresent as your fingerprint. When the standardized personal identification number was proposed in other European countries, it met with indignant opposition. The Swedes, however, quietly accepted this system two decades ago. Asked about her reaction to this system, an otherwise circumspect Swede immediately replied, "It's all right with me. I have nothing to hide! And if merging computer files by means of personal ID numbers can uncover people who are reporting lower income than they have to get higher welfare benefits, it's the price we have to pay!"

This response would appear to be typical, according to a survey conducted by the Institute. An overwhelming majority (71 percent) interviewed believe it is not improper for the government to merge computer files about its citizens, in order to check the truthfulness of the information given by applicants for social subsidies.

The same trust, or absence of inherent distrust, in the authorities and their creations—the rules and regulations—was evident in interviews conducted by the Institute in 1979 and 1980, at the time of the referendum on nuclear energy. In the public mind, responsibility for the safety of power plants and the constructive use of nuclear energy was placed in the hands of "them"—meaning alternatively experts, politicians, scientists, or members of the *riksdag*. The same attitude was expressed on another occasion regarding the regulation of a computerized society. In neither case were those interviewed of the opinion that the authorities themselves might require monitoring.

In sum: minds that function like precision instruments in other contexts lose their sharpness when it comes to subjecting their regulatory system to questioning. Indeed, there does not seem to be any keenly felt need to do so. We have the opposite of a credibility gap—a credibility bond between the people and the rules designed to regulate them.

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The German critic Hans Magnus Enzensberger visited Sweden in the autumn of 1982 and reported his observations of the country in *Dagens Nyheter*, the major daily newspaper. The series of articles was subsequently published in a small volume entitled *Swedish Autumn*. His discussion of the institutionalization of life and Swedish responses to what Max Weber called "the protective enclosure of institutions" is worth quoting at length:

> Theoretical analysis cannot get at the root of the peculiar character of the strategies one uses in this country to try to . . . [gloss] over the fundamental conflict between human beings and their institutions. Both sides meet each other in a state of affairs that would be unthinkable in other countries: in a state of historic innocence. . . . Swedish citizens are always willing to comply with their authorities with such naiveté and trust as if the benevolence of the authorities were beyond question. To a Spaniard, an Irishman, a Frenchman, such a posture would be incomprehensible. . . . even the Germans, who have always been said to be particularly obedient to authority, can no longer compete with the Swedes in this respect.
>
> No doubt this blissful credulity has many causes. The most important of these is probably a lack of experience, for which one can only envy the Swedes. Political powers in this country have since time immemorial refrained from a pasttime that has been daily fare in other parts of the world: armed persecution of citizens. Swedes therefore embrace the belief that the authorities are concerned only with the good [of the citizenry].
>
> And the Swedes are probably right in this assumption. The institutions . . . embody a distant but always benign power. It is precisely this benevolence that makes it unassailable.
>
> A kind of moral immunity, which is alien to other societies, envelops these institutions. To wish to curtail, control, or protect oneself against the Forces of Good could interest only knaves. It is therefore not surprising that this power is irresistibly growing, is penetrating all crevices of daily life, and is regulating the affairs of individuals to an extent that is without comparison in free societies.
>
> So it is that the institutional apparatus has succeeded not only in laying claim to a lion's share of people's incomes but also to their moral universe. It is [the apparatus] that provides for solidarity and equality, for succor and protection, for justice and decency—all of which are altogether too important to be left in the hands of ordinary people.[5]

And by now, the institutions themselves have come to believe in this myth, completing the circle and making it almost inviolable.

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HUMANITARIANISM

The Nordic countries have been among the first to carry forward this other great theme of Western civilization. Humanitarianism, however, is for us an independent theme and not a consequence of our rationalism. There is little or nothing in rationalism that necessarily leads us to take care of the mentally ill, the deformed, the invalid, nothing that argues for medical treatment for the aged and prolongation of the life of the senile, nothing that forces us to guarantee that a child born to retarded parents will be given as much care as other children. There are, of course, varieties of mercy in all known societies, but only Western civilization has developed a consistent concern for the dignity of every man and a consistent care for each and all individuals.

Humanitarianism, it is said, owes much to Christianity. For a full understanding of the welfare state, we may have to go back and explore the function of the Virgin Mary as it evolved in the Middle Ages. In *A Distant Mirror,* Barbara Tuchman describes the universal access that Mary provided in the fourteenth century for anyone in any circumstance:

> In daily life the Church was comforter, protector, physician. The Virgin and patron saints gave succor in trouble and protection against the evils and enemies that lurked along every man's path. . . . Above all, the Virgin was the ever-merciful, ever-dependable source of comfort, full of compassion for human frailty, caring nothing for laws and judges, ready to respond to anyone in trouble; amid all the inequities, injuries, and senseless harms, the one never-failing figure. She frees the prisoner from his dungeon, revives the starving with milk from her own breasts. . . . A hardened murderer has no less access. No matter what crime a person has committed, though every man's hand be against him, he is still not cut off from the Virgin.[6]

The Reformation cut off Protestant Europe from the cult of Mary. In their welfare development, the Protestant areas secularized and materialized her vision of a helpful hand at every turn of life, available to the fortunate and unfortunate, the articulate and inarticulate. The Nordic countries are not unique in this development, only advanced.

The most elaborate manifestation of the welfare state—the one we find in Sweden—is a product of Leftists in a rather secular state, often working in opposition to church officials. The welfare state may be unlikely to flourish except in a civilization in which values of

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neighborly love and charity have been preached for generations: yet its establishment in Scandinavia is mostly the work of a generation of atheists or lukewarm believers. It is the product of a political struggle over the distribution of income and privilege, not a gift from heaven.

We have in post–World-War-II Sweden a situation in which the war on poverty has been won; urban rehabilitation is a fact; housing is subsidized so that the working class pays no higher share of its income for a home than does the middle class; medical and dental care at nominal fees is available to all; education up through the doctorate is free; unestablished newlyweds receive loans to set up housekeeping guaranteed by the state; every expectant mother is given care, and families automatically receive child support; a parent can take leave from work with pay to care for a sick child; early retirement with nearly full pension is a realizable goal for everyone; no one suffers destitution because of loss of earning power, and so on. Furthermore, help to the individual is not dependent on the charitable whims of the wealthy, on a humble and pious attitude on the part of the recipient, or on the pursuasiveness of his pleas for help. His right to care and help is as solid as his right to vote or to own property, and they are given across the board, to the good and the bad alike, to the friendly and the obnoxious, in predetermined manners and amounts. In the period since World War II, Sweden has organized humanitarianism from top to bottom, cradle to grave, like no other part of the world.

Organized, systematized humanitarianism has both merits and drawbacks. It is not dependent on grace or the mercy of the Virgin or a patron saint, or even on human intervention through individual acts of charity. Both divine and arbitrary human intervention are unpredictable, and both may be subject to bias. Welfare ideology seeks rational, predictable solutions to man's tribulations. To meet the demands for justice and equality of that ideology, rational humanitarianism must be meted out on a predetermined impersonal basis.

But while humanitarianism may become more evenly distributed through the logic of rationalism, in the process it loses its heart. The conscience of the average citizen is soothed by the assumed reliability of bureaucratized humanitarianism, and he begins to believe that his fellows will be taken care of by the system without any effort on his

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part. The milk of human kindness therefore flows less frequently from one human being to another; instead, it is dispensed in homogenized form through regulations and institutions. It is this dualism in moral outlook—this preoccupation with *formalized* humanitarianism coexistent with a dearth of *spontaneous* humanity—that makes Swedes seem so paradoxical.

But the problem is more than moral and psychological. It is organizational, economic, and political too. The expansion of social welfare since World War II has largely segregated the consumers of social welfare from normal everyday life. Children are sent to day-nurseries; the unemployed, to retraining centers; the sick, to hospitals; the aged, to old people's homes or facilities for the chronically ill. As a rule, wherever welfare policy intervenes, normal social contacts are broken up. This is a cruel rule for a humanitarian activity.

Care and service are provided by cumbersome monopolies or near-monopolies that receive nearly all their income from taxes or similar revenues; the consequences are not always or necessarily in the best interests of the community. When the economy falters, the welfare system is put under a severe strain. The politicians have responded to this crisis by increasing taxes and by making cuts in general benefits and subsidies. At the same time, they have tried to provide extra help to "the truly weak and needy." Pressure for higher taxes and a growing tendency to grant subsidies and welfare services according to need rather than across the board are blowtorches that send growing numbers of controllers, with their ever-increasing regulations and controls, scurrying forth.

European civilization has long tried to achieve a marriage of rationalism and humanitarianism. The classical Greek outlook, out of which rationality developed, is concerned with general cases and common types, while the Christian view, the source of humanitarianism, is concerned with the uniqueness of each individual soul. These two views of human affairs are by definition incompatible. A perfect merger cannot be achieved. One such marriage has been attempted in Sweden. To be sure, it was spectacular and was held up as a model. It is, however, far from a happy and perfect union. Like every other society, it is gestative with its successor; today's nonmilitary high-tax society is about to give birth to the computerized, controlled one of tomorrow. We ought to be able to do better.

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ENDNOTES

An earlier version of this article was presented to the Aspen Institute seminar, "The Nordic Countries: Past, Present and Future," Saltsjöbaden, Sweden, June 16-19, 1982. I am much indebted to Greta Frankel for her contributions to this rewriting.

[1]New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936.

[2]There may be a reaction in the late eighties to the individualism and privatization of the Karlsson generation not unlike the reaction of the thirties against the "roaring twenties." At that time, the reaction was (1) antiliberal, putting collective and national interests over individual; (2) antiproletarian and antiplutocratic, honoring hard work and pushing for an aristocracy of achievement; (3) antidemocratic, taking public stands through action and demonstrations rather than through secret ballots, in the belief that a brotherhood of corporate interests with strong will and faith was necessary to bring order out of chaos. Mikael Karlsson has no sense of this.

[3]Totowa, New Jersey: Bedminster Press, 1965, pp. 196-97.

[4]*The Leader: A New Face for American Management* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981), p. 149.

[5]*Svensk Host*, En Reportageserie i *Dagens Nyheter*, 1982, pp. 17-18.

[6]*A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century* (London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1980), p. 33.

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Hans F. Dahl

Those Equal Folk

THE NORDIC WAY SEEMS GENERALLY to lead to the left, to radical or leftish solutions to almost all national problems. The governments themselves are normally socialist, with taxes—including that great leveler, the inheritance tax—for the most part high. Compassion informs and guides their actions, both at home, where crime control and prison systems are run on remarkably humane principles, and in the international sphere, where their aid to developing nations is quite generous. Indeed, any sensible liberal would count on the Nordic members when trying to push through almost any reform in international organizations. Nordic thought and political preferences seem almost automatically to follow a leftish course. Why?

If an observer of the North were to look for common denominators of the political underpinnings in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, he would find very few. Finland and Norway would stand out as "naturally" radical countries owing to their specific historic traditions as the "have-nots" of the Nordic mainland. Having once been subjected to foreign rule—Finland first by Sweden and later by Russia, Norway by Denmark and then Sweden—they have fewer upper-class traditions, fewer remnants of feudalism, than the other countries of the North. For centuries, "ruling" Finland and Norway was basically a matter of taming peasant unrest and getting the natives to pay their taxes. It is not unnatural to expect popular movements and parties to turn leftward in countries where governors and viceregents used to rule, and these traditions have been passed down to modern times.

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But what of Sweden and Denmark, the "haves" of the North, countries of elegant castles and noble families, many of them extant today; of tax-collecting authorities that operate efficiently and central bureaucracies of great wealth; of gorgeous palaces and magnificent churches? If Stockholm is the Berlin of the North, then Sweden itself, with its vast iron ore deposits and sophisticated banking, is a cradle of local capitalism. And if Copenhagen can rightly be called the Paris of Scandinavia, its native islands of Zeeland and Fyn are the Nordic Loire, so densely enshrined are they with beautiful castles and stately towers, in themselves a signal of a Marc Blochian surplus of agricultural production. One may truly wonder: How did a dominantly leftish political culture emerge from these soils? Why did feudal Denmark, capitalist Sweden, mountainous Norway, and peasant-tilled Finland develop so common a course of political radicalism?

It might be well, before proceeding further, to describe more accurately what the radicalism in Nordic culture is actually about. A survey by Erik Allardt of social values and conceptions of "welfare" in the four Scandinavian mainland countries sketches a picture of surprising conformity, but one that also shows interesting differences (Table 1). Attitudes toward social values—economic welfare, quality of life, and political participation—color the Nordic map in a slightly differentiated way, with the Swedes and Finns at opposite poles, and Denmark and Norway normally in between. But the most striking feature of Allardt's study is surely the uniformity of Nordic values:

TABLE 1. Nordic Attitudes toward Income and Power

	Denmark	Finland	Norway	Sweden
Is the income level of some groups too high?				
Yes	56%	72%	41%	60%
No	23	13	28	23
Don't know	21	15	31	17
Have some groups too much power?				
Yes	38	45	31	46
No	37	28	35	32
Don't know	25	28	34	23

SOURCE: Adapted from Erik Allardt: *Att ha, att vara, att älska (To Have, To Be, To Love)* (Helsinki: 1975)

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most people are seriously concerned about equality, and favor a far-reaching leveling of incomes and properties. These respondents, remember, enjoy the most equal distribution by far in all of Western Europe and are ruled by some of the most "democratic" governments on earth. Still, they seem to be dissatisfied and want even more equality.

And so it is indeed. Any foreign observer of the North will soon become aware of the exceptionally high esteem in which the word *rettferd*, equity, is held. The quest for *rettferd* is so profoundly rooted in the Northern value system that one may reasonably wonder what its proper translation is in English. *Rettferd*, however, defies translation; its meaning is so deeply buried in the mysteries of the Scandinavian political language that it cannot easily be wrested from it and brought out into the international light of day. Attempts, of course, have been made, some with great sophistication. Torstein Eckhoff, a Norwegian lawyer, in a recent major book draws the following distinction between the distributive and the equilibristic connotations of the concept: the former denotes a fair and even distribution of goods and values; the latter, the securing and support of the balance existing in a *rettferd* system.[1] The Nordic equity ethos, therefore, appears to apply both to the political action of leveling out—making the rich pay, taxing the top—and, in a jealous comparison, of making sure that nobody overtakes and passes you in position or possessions.

A great number of social studies bear out this dualism. The pervasive egalitarianism in the Nordic countries rests on a demand to dismantle privileges that is more "leftish" than is usual in Europe. At the same time, their passion for equity tends to make the Nordic people slightly conceited, perhaps even a little provincially moralistic, in their pride of the equity in their national systems of distribution.

Are Scandinavians all socialists, then? The social-democratic parties of the North are certainly strong, and labor unions there enjoy an official position that is quite rare even in Europe. The merger of political socialism and economic unionism into one uniform movement—*the* Labor movement—is also a special feature of the Nordic countries, borrowing more from Britain than from the Continent. Since it first took shape nearly a hundred years ago, the Labor movement has succeeded somewhat in getting its members to look at the world through the structural grid of "classes" and "exploitation," in this way underpinning an ideological claim for "equity" in general. But

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there is no indication that the ideology of socialism in any sense has been adopted by the broader strata of the Nordic populations. Nor have the Nordic labor parties shown any strong inclination to dwell on the theory and principles of socialism proper. It was not until the appearance of state interventionist economists such as Gunnar Myrdal in the late thirties and forties—and his identity as a "socialist" is indeed debatable—that any party intellectual at all gained international fame within the workers' movement. Nordic socialist politicians abhor theories and tend to be at least as pragmatic and adaptive as their fellow politicians in other parties. There is little pathos in the style of Nordic man, less mythos in his conceptions of the world. Pragmatism is what filters out when Nordic value preferences, be they laborite in orientation or bourgeois, are probed. A few principles, a modest sense of choice, very many ad hoc arguments, and much careful balancing of interests: that is the Nordic way, even in socialism.

In looking for the historical roots of social-democratic ideology, one finds that Nordic socialism in many ways followed the course of the continental labor movement. Both syndicalism and communism enjoyed their high tides in Scandinavia, but unlike other places, they both passed without imposing really lasting traits on the labor movement as a whole. This is all the more remarkable, because the Nordic labor parties at certain moments in history showed themselves to be particularly radical and leftish. In Sweden and Norway especially, young syndicalist workers from the new heavy industries of hydroelectricity and chemicals, and above all, from construction, raised waves of popular unrest in the early decades of the century as the new stage of industrial development spilled over into traditional agricultural areas. In some cases, it was the young Nordic immigrants to America who, returning home with their heads filled by militant IWW ideas, pushed for change. Right up to the fifties and sixties, the Nordic union *cum* party labor movements were led by men who had grown up as revolutionaries in the first two decades of the century, who had matured to Keynesianism in the thirties, and who, at the height of their powers during postwar reconstruction, had entered into the Marshall Plan and (in Denmark and Norway) even the NATO alliance. These men, whose biographies dramatically span the shifting terms of labor politics throughout a turbulent century, were

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consistent on at least one point: their shrinking belief in both syndicalism and socialism as a social doctrine.

Even communism, which at one point seemed to form the spearhead of the labor movement, waned. Around 1920, communist factions splintered off from all the Nordic labor parties, but apart from the Finnish Communists, they soon lost their popular appeal. During the Great Depression, when millions of jobless Europeans went communist, the Nordic Communist parties somehow lost their attraction completely. Compared to the situation on the Continent, Scandinavian worker-communism since that time has represented only a minor challenge to the great social-democratic parties—even as the latter marched steadily to the right.

But if socialism is weak, the quest for social equity is strong. In pushing equity, in leveling of incomes, and in mounting public expenditures, the Social Democrats have been the leading force ever since their parties succeeded, after the introduction of universal suffrage, in wresting the working-class vote from the parties of the bourgeoisie. When Olof Palme, in a recent Danish report on Swedish politics, is portrayed as an orator shouting repetitively the words *jämlikhet och rättvisa, jämlikhet och rättvisa*, equity and equality, over the heads of his audience, one surely gets the point—equity is an almost tedious theme in social-democratic propaganda.

Equity, however, is no invention of the Social Democrats. The appeal of social justice and equality in party politics goes back at least to the 1890s, well before the Socialist breakthrough, and it was propelled into the bodies politic by the Liberals. Scandinavian Liberal parties differed from their continental counterparts by remaining ostentatiously left in social and economic issues—as in fact they still do. A member of the German Free Democratic Party or an Italian liberal from *Partito Liberale Italiano* would feel deeply alien at a Nordic Liberal party congress, where the leftish slogans and antiestablishment claims seem to indicate a closer kinship with the environmental green wave than with continental middle-class capitalism. In terms of historic traditions, Nordic Liberals are scarcely Liberals at all, and usually avoid the term by calling themselves "*Venstre*" or "*Folkpartiet*"—left or popular parties.

A few historical milestones will illuminate this tradition. In 1891 a scheme for old-age pensions—the first noncontributory system in the world—was introduced by the Danish Liberals. The Danes, more-

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over, were not alone in going remarkably far left in their claims and plans for social reforms; in the process, the Liberals in Sweden cooperated frequently with the Swedish Social-Democratic leader Hjalmar Branting, who was invited to join the Liberal cabinet in 1917. At that time, too, Norwegian Liberals had shown their political stripe by voting almost unanimously to abolish not only the Royal Order of St. Olaf, but the whole ceremonial system of orders as well, a decision that nearly sparked a constitutional crisis, since Norway had only recently gained full independence from Sweden by establishing a royal house of its own. Not too far in outlook to American Progressives, the Nordic Liberals were radicals indeed, favoring far-reaching social legislation and leveling economic reforms. The nascent labor movement was thus provided with an ambitious stepping-stone, which one of their leaders, a Norwegian Communist member of Parliament, in 1921 fully acknowledged in a famous remark: "Labor is the legitimate offspring of the Liberals." Or, as the Danish labor leader Thorvald Stauning, prime minister almost uninterruptedly between 1924 and 1942, used to say—"No party is so close to the Social Democrats in any country as the Liberals in Denmark." The reason for this kinship lies in the soil, in the common basis in agricultural and rural values of Nordic popular movements, be they socialist, radical, or liberal.

Despite the "urban" impression of the modern welfare states, the Nordic countries in many ways remain overwhelmingly rural. The Liberal parties of the late nineteenth century were all founded and developed as coalitions of agrarians and urban radicals—which caused party cleavages later on, but which nonetheless gave substance to the notion of "leftishness" as a cluster of values that spoke to the ideals of nearly all rural factions. The Northern countries have no tradition of rural mass conservatism, such as in France or Germany. Nor were their populations in the countryside ever held under the strict domination of the Church. On the contrary, Christian life in Northern rural communities has traditionally been dominated by solid grass-roots movements, originating with the great revivals of the early nineteenth century that raged mainly outside, and even sometimes contrary to, the established state churches. Popular fundamentalism is definitely antiestablishment in these countries, where religious feeling tends to generate radical demands at least as much as it preaches pious submittance to worldly authorities.

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Rural radicalism is usually explained further by the small-scale independent or semi-independent farm that dominated the Scandinavian landscape since the early nineteenth century. Even as late as the 1930s, family farms were still the largest source of employment, with rural populations between 30 (Denmark) and 60 percent (Finland) of the total. Sweden, already reckoned an important industrial nation, had nearly 40 percent of its population engaged in small-scale farming; indeed, Swedish industry had always relied on its farmers, both full-time and part-time, as its core work force. Millions of these farmers helped form the parliamentary basis for socialist governments in the thirties, after a series of "horse tradings" between Social Democrats and Agrarian parties. The Danish and Swedish "red-green" agreements were consummated in 1933, the Norwegian in 1935, all of them providing the Social Democrats with lasting positions in the government. Parallel developments took place in Finland. Thus the celebrated and venerable social democracy governing Scandinavian countries rests historically on agreements with the Agrarians. The Socialists themselves, in fact, are much more rurally based than the German SPD (Social Democratic party) or the British Labour party. This applies to the electorate as well as to the inner party culture. Consider, for instance, the impression that the archetypal member of the Norwegian parliament, the *Storting*, made on the American social scientist Harry Eckstein in the early 1960s, when most of its members actually were Socialists:

> The manner in which authority, especially high authority, generally is wielded in Norway contrasts sharply with the manner in which it is exercised in highly inegalitarian countries such as Great Britain. . . . The great thing even among parliamentarians, for example, is to appear to be a regular fellow: practical and common-sensical, well-versed in dull facts, rather inelegant, unimpressed, indeed embarrassed by success. One displays certain rustic graces, such as quiet attentiveness, amiability, a lack of cantankerousness, disrespect and disdain; but one also displays a certain rustic clumsiness: a monotonous delivery, a bare style, a lack of "manners" (although not of courtesy). In these respects the Storting and the House of Commons are virtually polar opposites.[2]

It goes without saying that parliamentary behavior is much the same in all the Nordic countries, even if the Swedish style contains more *hauteur*, and the Danish, an additional flavor of genial joviali-

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ty, compared to the Norwegian and the Finnish. Parliamentarians from the Nordic countries nevertheless find it very easy to join in a common tune each year at the meetings of the Nordic Council, a body composed entirely of members of the respective parliaments.

Rural radicalism, then, seems to lie at the heart of the Nordic equity syndrome. *Rettferd* is no twentieth century socialist doctrine, nor is it a nineteenth century liberal invention of the classical European type. Rather, its significance lies in its correspondence to core values of Nordic agrarian culture as they have been mediated through religious, political, and economic institutions from the nineteenth century down to this very day.

Such a blunt statement of course provokes immediate counterthoughts. The mere idea of a proud but pious peasant, tilling his own modest soil with a stubborn sense of justice and a natural propensity toward democracy, resembles unmistakably the romatic preindustrial cliché that circulates for various purposes in almost any country of the world. Why, then, should the system of Nordic small-scale independent farms engender a political culture so totally different from, say, the French? And why should the mere fact that agriculture remained dominant right up to modern times account for "equity" in the Nordic countries, when it gave rise to quite other values in other societies?

There is of course no simple answer to this. But the mere conventionality of the idea of preindustrial and perhaps even precapitalist values clustered in a *rettferd* system indicates that such a value system may have *survived longer* in the Nordic countries than in Scotland, for example, or central France, northern Germany, Switzerland, Bavaria, or the other agricultural regions of Europe. Assuming, then, that the preconditions for rural *rettferd* radicalism broke down or disappeared in most other countries, why did it persist in Scandinavia?

To answer this, we must take into account certain facts: first, the comparatively small scale of the Northern countries; second, the relatively long periods of peace enjoyed since the Napoleonic wars; third, the particular political topography of sparsely populated areas, as most of the regions of the North are (apart, of course, from Denmark and southern Sweden); and so on. Although these have contributed substantially to the persistence of rural *rettferd* radicalism, perhaps the fact that there has been no class war in the Nordic coun-

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tries in modern times is even more important. Their internal history is in fact remarkably nonviolent. Not a single peasant was hanged during the nineteenth century for class reasons, and except for some misunderstandings within the Swedish army in 1931, when five workers were ambushed by a clumsy mistake, not a single worker shot during the twenties. There is, however, one great exception: in light of Nordic standards, the scale of "white" bourgeois repercussions against the "red" workers of Finland after the civil war in 1919 is almost unbelievable. Some ten thousand "reds" were shot, and conditions in prison camps were horribly inhuman. The incidents of 1919-20 are felt by all Scandinavians to be a grim anomaly; in fact, the mere mention of these events was for many years considered to be improper and disloyal in Finland itself, until a new generation started asking questions in the 1960s. The Finnish civil war is a wound both in Finnish history and in an otherwise unbroken nonviolent tradition of class coexistence in the Northern societies, in itself perhaps *the* single most remarkable aspect of Nordic history.

Language may help explain why this is so. The endurance of this remarkably nonviolent tradition is mirrored in a single language concept, which, at the same time, is one of the most commonly used words in any of the Nordic tongues: *folk*—the people. When we probe the meaning of this word, we shall see that, for unique historical reasons, it encompasses both equity and social coexistence, and thus provides us with a conceptual key to the secrets of some important Nordic traditions.

The meaning of the Nordic concept of "folk" lies somewhere in between the German *das Volk* and the French *le peuple*. On the German side, the idea of "folk" contains elements of romanticism and even Hegelianism; and the Nordic "folk" has certainly regarded itself as "dedicated to fulfill the development of the *Weltgeist*," such as Hegel maintained in his *Philosophy of Law*. The nineteenth century Scandinavian way of conceiving "folket" owed as much to German modes of thought as to German ways of exploring the depths of the people's souls, with all the fervor of genuine romanticism. Radical Scandinavian Romantics mined deep into the lore of their native societies to bring forth the hidden powers of popular music, fairy tales, and arts and crafts. Many followed a purely German program and, indeed, found an eager market for their discoveries in Germany, the Nordic countries' bridge to the Continent. The links with Germany

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and the German sense of *das Nordische* that ran through the concept of "folk" were, however, brutally terminated by the Nazi occupation of Denmark and Norway in 1940, and German influence over Scandinavia ended. But the notion of "folket" still flows from a common source: German romatic nationalism.

By 1850 all the Nordic countries had founded traditions according to which the "folk" was not only the source of all power, in the Montesquieuan sense, but the well from which powers and rights, culture and history, flowed, all in one entity. And that entity was the destiny ascribed to each folk according to its cultural genetic code. Even late in the nineteenth century, the mature Ibsen, the young Strindberg, the aging Grundtvig, and the infant Mannerheim all inhaled an air where "folket," the people, still gave history its life-giving oxygen.

Broadly considered, German *Volk* and *völkisch* values are typically conservative, partly because of their origin in, and cultivation by, the upper classes, partly owing to their ugly function of legitimating aggressiveness toward other peoples and nations. The Nordic "folk," however, here ceases to follow the German conception because of its affinity to the radicalism inherent in the French *le peuple*. Added to the romantic component in "folk" is a very democratic one. Indeed, "folk" has been used in its French—sometimes even its revolutionary—meaning ever since the uprisings of the late eighteenth century. The Norwegian Thrane movement of the 1840s, a far-reaching pre-socialist rebellion on a par with the British Chartist Movement, swept the nation with claims in the name of the people, just as the early folklorists, the true descendants of the eighteenth century Romantics, were penetrating the narrow valleys and fjord communities to collect the tongues, the songs, and the artistic products of the "folk." The blend of Hegelian and Jacobean connotations makes "folk" one of the most common words in Nordic political language, culturally conservative and politically leftish at one and the same time.

This can clearly be seen in its free use with other concepts, such as the Danish "Folkehøjskole" (popular high school), the Swedish "Folkrörelse" (national organization), and the common Nordic idea of "Folkeopplysning" (popular enlightenment), ideas all born around the middle of the nineteenth century and brought to institutional fruition by huge democratic movements. Even today they pro-

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vide Nordic culture with its deep belief that interest organizations are the pillars of democracy, and that the true meaning of culture, as it flows through the entire public sphere—from state broadcasting to community work—is education. The institutions for organizing education and cultivating the "folk" are the consensus issues *par excellence* in Nordic politics, so much so that no government can suggest cuts in them even during economic slumps—because it is precisely at those times that they are considered to be more important than ever. Educating, organizing, and cultivating the masses indeed fulfills the twofold meaning of the Nordic conception of "folk": the conservative aim of fostering national identity in accordance with romantic traditions, and the radical purpose of promoting social mobility through education, with the notion of *equity* running throughout. In the modern welfare state, "folk" and *rettferd* are linked together in a particular way. "Equity is the essence of any good private home," the Swedish labor leader Per Albin Hansson stated in 1928, as he launched the term "folk home"—*folkhjemmet*—as his party's name for the welfare state. There was nothing socialist in his visions, just fullfillment of the Nordic idea of a decent society, with folk and *rettferd* flowing together in the notion of a home.

Yet the welfare state, with all its equity, obviously has its price. Like Tocqueville pondering the future of America, a modern observer of the North surely will ask what values are being sacrificed by the passion for equality that governs these countries. Can it be, once again, that liberty is at stake? Can these countries, with their romantic notions of equal folk joined together in national communities, really cope with the pressure for pluralism in a modern industrial society, with its social conflicts and its free flow of communications?

There is undoubtedly a lot to be said about the limits of Nordic pluralism. In some ways, these are not societies that experiment, exulting in difference, in eccentricity, in true individuality. You don't go to Scandinavia to have your ideas challenged by creative minorities. The foreign workers pouring in from Southern Europe or Pakistan will find a rather well-defined set of rights at their disposal, but no feeling of being welcomed for their contribution to the richness of culture or diversity of ethnicity. Suspicion toward anything extraordinary is everywhere. During the last hundred years, many a great artist has fled the North, in anger and exasperation, and not only for tax reasons. Fifty years ago the Danish-Norwegian author Aksel San-

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demose formulated an ironic code for Nordic behavior called "the Law of Jante," in which were reflected all the dark sides of small-scale societies insisting on equity: envy, jealousy, and extreme degrees of social control.[3] The community of Jante surely is an apt metaphor for Scandinavia as a whole. Liberal values are not pivotal here. More and more, this fact raises disturbing sentiments all over Scandinavia today.

Because of the excessive emphasis on equity values, the Nordic countries will score comparatively low on "pluralism," on their ability to tolerate alternatives and allow a multiplicity of groups and opinions to blossom. This is a quite common allegation, and one that Nordic social scientists have treated seriously by developing at least some elements of a general social theory to explain why at least some Nordic countries shun pluralism in their social habits and institutions. The theory, according to the Norwegian political scientist Ulf Torgersen, goes as follows:[4]

In countries where people live at great distances from one another, such as on the sparsely populated Scandinavian peninsula, the building of national institutions tends to favor "single-track" solutions. Although economic reasons are the determining factor, the notion of equity, of giving the same to all, lends legitimacy to these solutions. The cost of building alternative institutions—a second national broadcasting corporation, a second university system, a different traffic structure—will quite often be prohibitive. The preference in such societies, consequently, is for single solutions, systems that encompass everyone and make possible the transfer of goods and incomes from the densely populated and richer areas to those of sparse population, who in turn depend on these subsidies for their well-being, if not their very existence.

The argument can be extended to the field of culture. Uniform social institutions inevitably give rise to uniform ideas and values. Traditionally, there has been only one university in most Nordic countries, and this has provided a definite uniformity in science and teaching. There is also one religion, and it is state supported. Until the late 1970s, there was a state monopoly in broadcasting, and a near-state monopoly in elementary education, except in Denmark. Values tend to be informed by equity, and they are spread through single channels: for instance, in most political parties, the formation of an opposition is considered rather difficult, and is regarded as

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much more dangerous and disloyal in Scandinavia than in most other Western countries.

When equity is preferred for structural reasons, pluralism as a working value will suffer. Our theory, however, will have to take into account two formidable exceptions. The first is the case of Denmark, which in at least three areas has gone its own way: its school system allows parents and groups to establish their own schools; its laws tend to be more tolerant toward deviant groups; and its political attitudes are generally regarded by politicians themselves as more permissive than, say, those of the Swedes and the Norwegians.

In fact, the case of Denmark is an excellent example of Torgersen's theory via-à-vis population density. Denmark is unmistakably Nordic, above all in its romantic folk traditions and in the importance of equity in its political and cultural life. Yet it alone among the Nordic countries enjoys a more or less "continental" population distribution. Few observers could fail to note that the sense of pluralism is far greater in Denmark than in the other Nordic countries, and those who deviate from majority norms enjoy a higher degree of protection. Also, Denmark's treatment of its Jewish citizens during the German occupation of the Second World War is remarkable. On German demands, Jews in Norway were identified and singled out for arrest by ordinary Norwegian civil servants, and without delay, were handed over to the SS to be shipped to Auschwitz for extermination. During the war crime trials after the liberation, the question of responsibility for this atrocity was touched upon rather lightly by the Norwegian courts, not because of any anti-Semitic sentiments, but simply because Jews were "different" and not regarded as a protectable minority. In Denmark, on the other hand, the entire population stood up to protect their Jewish compatriots, and nearly all Danish Jews were rescued from the SS through a famous and gallant operation, whereby hundreds of small vessels, under cover of night, brought them to unoccupied Sweden the day before they were to be arrested. The difference in attitude behind these two wartime episodes is striking. It is not too much to say that, in extreme historic situations, tolerance for pluralism may be a question of life and death, though normally it is fortunately not.

The second exception is the political party system. One would think that in a society which values uniformity, politics would be a

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two-party affair, or at least limited to a restricted number of party alternatives. Not so the Nordic countries. Their party structure displays an amazing diversity of choices. Traditionally, all countries have a basic five-party system consisting of, from right to left, Conservatives, Agrarians, Liberals, Social Democrats, and Communists, all pursuing Nordic equity with energy and with the overwhelming support of their constituents. The number of parties, however, is growing, which virtually ensures that governments very often are founded on coalitions. This in fact has been the case with more than half of the governments formed in the Northern countries since World War II. As a result, new splinter parties form, sometimes in protest when the mother party enters a coalition, sometimes against the mere possibility of such an eventuality. Whatever the reasons, this tendency has given birth to three or four Socialist and two or three Liberal parties in each country, a process probably further encouraged by the fact that equity is at work here too: If *you* want to form a party, why stop *me*?

This embarrassment of riches is ameliorated somewhat by the structural conditions of the political machines in each country. Denmark, for example, pluralistic and easily communicable, is at one extreme, with some thirteen parties contesting for seats in Parliament at present, and centralized, heavily corporate Sweden, with five, at the other. A new national political party can be quickly established in Denmark compared with Sweden, where innovations in policy tend to come from within the prevailing organizational structure. This is also the case of Finnish politics, whereas in Norway, some nine parties compete in national elections.

Because the number of parties is large, the official philosophy tends to regard the richness of political alternatives as a precondition for democracy. New ideas, it is assumed, spring forth from the tensions between the prevailing parties: the more parties you have, the more ideas you get—within certain limits, of course. Political parties consequently are subsidized by the state, with a certain sum granted per voter per election—a most equal distribution, one might say. Newspapers run by existing political parties, moreover, get a lion's share from state subsidies to the press. In this respect, the Nordic countries seem to favor an institutional pluralism that even goes beyond the market principle, since even without sufficient readers to support a party newspaper, it is published all the same—in the name

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of equality. The price paid is that, because of the rules of the game, newcomers find the entry to be narrow, sometimes even nonexistent. Even if the political structure is pluralistic, choices—and the tolerance for others' choices—are limited.

Here, it seems, we are at the heart of the Nordic dilemma in the tension between equity and liberty: how to stimulate and ensure pluralism within a frozen structure of institutions. The passion for equity that has been passed down from the nineteenth century and that helped shape the political system of today is certainly a fine thing—so long as it does not prevent new ideas, new institutions, and novel interests to emerge in the fabric of Nordic society.

ENDNOTES

[1]Torstein Eckhoff, *Justice—Its Determinants in Social Interaction* (Rotterdam: Rotterdam University Press, 1974).

[2]Harry Eckstein, *Division and Cohesion in Democracy: A Study of Norway* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).

[3]Aksel Sandemose, *En flyktning krysser sitt spor* (Oslo: 1933).

[4]Ulf Torgersen, "Norwegian Political Institutions," *Norwegian Society*, edited by Natalie Rogoff Ramsøy (Oslo: Oslo University Press, 1974).

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Bent Rold Andersen

Rationality and Irrationality of the Nordic Welfare State

"THE MIDDLE WAY" and "laboratories of the world" are terms often used to characterize the social and economic systems of the Nordic countries;[1] what is meant, of course, is that these countries have tried to combine elements from capitalist and socialist economics which are normally conceived to be antagonistic. Fundamentally, Nordic societies are based on private enterprise and the market economy, but the incentives that fuel the latter—inequalities of income, fortune, and power—are not given free reign there. Rather, they are kept in check by progressive income taxes—which seem excessive compared to other countries—and by free education, medical care, and social services, which in Sweden and Denmark, at least, are more extensive than in any other nonsocialist society. Furthermore, tax-financed income maintenance and comprehensive welfare schemes raise the minimum level of income above what most people in the industrialized world would regard as the limit of poverty.

Visitors—or Scandinavians who chose to leave—maintain that egalitarianism has gone beyond economics to become uniformism, and that it now permeates both education and cultural and political life. The standard is set by the rear party,[2] it is said, and superiority takes second place to mediocrity.

Perhaps Danish poet Hans Vilhelm Kaalund summed up best what appears to outsiders to be the Nordic welfare state's attitude toward life:

På det jævne, på det jævne,	"Feet on ground, feet on ground"
altid i min sjæl det sang	so I always heard it sound,

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målt med fantasiens evne
kækt jeg mig fra jorden svang.
Alt det andet vil sig hævne,
er kun splid og undergang.
På det jævne, på det jævne,
det er livets sejrssang.

when my soul so light and bright
swung itself into the height.
Life's revenge will catch you soon,
if you try to reach the moon.
"Feet on ground, feet on ground,"
so your triumph-hymn should sound.

Yet Kaalund lived in the nineteenth century and wrote his little poem fifty years before the term "welfare state" was coined. Thus the poem expresses an attitude shared by many people at that time. And it was not meant ironically; Kaalund was not poking fun at the Nordic worship of mediocrity, nor do most Danes today read the poem in that light. On the contrary, it is one of the most beloved and popular poems in Denmark, and its message is taken quite seriously still.

Certain Scandinavians see the egalitarian approach as a kind of envy—a hatred of the sublime, a witchhunt against brilliance, a worship of mediocrity—but these are often people who feel persecuted, and a few may in fact have talents and gifts that do go unappreciated. But if there is a kernel of truth in this interpretation, it is certainly not the *whole* truth. There is no general hatred of the sublime, at least not more than there is anywhere else. But it is seldom recognized in its incipient stages, in Norden as elsewhere, so that the Nordic attitude toward the superior or the brilliant is uneasiness, anxiety, shyness—which is, after all, not unlike the typical Anglo-Saxon reaction.

Most Scandinavians are well aware that our way of life does not encourage genius. Insisting on equality, we perhaps tend to "cut off the head of the tall person." We regret this—but only moderately; it seems a necessary price to pay for what we want almost passionately (if that adverb could ever be used in relation to clog-wearing Scandinavians), a place in the sun for the rank and file, including the rear party. Equality, it is felt, is the most substantial part of Nordic wealth. The Danish theologian and poet Nicolai Grundtvig expressed this very well:

Og da har i rigdom vi drevet
det vidt,
når få har for meget, og færre
for lidt.

And yet in wealth real far have
we gone
when few have too much, and
poor are none.

Thus those who believe Nordic "mediocrity" is a fruit of the welfare state are certainly wrong. Rather than mediocrity, we might say that

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there is a passion for equality. But this attitude was present long before the welfare state began. It is a substantial part of our cultural heritage; it is in our blood. The welfare state did not create this passion for equality, but rather is itself an economic, social, cultural, and organizational expression of efforts to promote it.

Yet, equality in this Nordic sense breeds neither uniformity nor conformity. Visitors to Scandinavia do not find that sameness in clothes, behavior, or opinion is its first and most noticeable characteristic. On the contrary, an unusual permissiveness and lack of common norms and values seems to be the most remarkable feature of Nordic life. But these are not fruits of the welfare state either. Grundtvig, who preached the wealth of equality, was also the spiritual founder of the folk high-school movement[3]—which is extremely liberal and pluralistic in its approach—and coined its moto: "Freedom for Loke as well as for Thor"—two antagonistic gods in Norse mythology. And to Ibsen, "the individual is always right." Nordic egalitarianism demands equality in economic circumstances, in dignity, and in respect, but it does not require uniformity of opinion. Permissiveness and pluralism are older than social welfare.

Criticism from beyond our borders counts for little with us since we use egalitarian standards to judge success. We are proud of Finland's Sibelius, of Norway's Grieg, and of Denmark's Carl Nielsen, but do not deny that Nordic contributions to music and the arts can in no way match those of the Continent. And although Sweden produced a Strindberg, and Iceland a Laxness, we know that there are only a few Northern authors who can really reach and move the international audience. To others, this modest contribution to world culture might seem the bitter fruits of Scandinavian mediocrity; to us, it does not, because what really matters is whether we have succeeded in abolishing poverty and illiteracy, in reducing the tensions between social classes, in promoting social mobility, and in dignifying the common man so that he feels on an equal footing with the rich and the famous. We know that these goals have reduced the incentive to shine: the outstanding person is neither well paid nor exalted; the low-performer is not disdained. In some respects, Nordic societies are poor in both individual risks and rewards, and perhaps even poorer in challenges—and until recently, we thought we knew the price.

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But it has not been easy to convince the Nordic people that the weakening of incentives has hampered economic growth, since not only have egalitarian policies fostered cooperation between the social classes, as well as extremely peaceful and disciplined unions, a well-educated labor force, and a high degree of consensus, but they have also, and perhaps more importantly, replaced an ages-old fear of poverty with a newfound security. And who can deny that for many decades the Nordic economies were among the most prosperous in the world? A recent analysis of several indicators of economic performance of nineteen "rich" democracies for the period 1950-74—countries with large public sectors and redistributional systems, as well as countries with small public outlays—found that the former were not key factors in economic performance, that in fact "the welfare states [were not] spending themselves into the grave."[4] Nor have weakened incentives forced the introduction of massive, direct state control of private industry, as many who subscribe to classical economic theory predicted. The welfare state, it seems, has not only reduced risks and rewards, but has, at the same time, lessened social and political tensions, labor conflicts, and resistance to change, factors that in many other countries are barriers to well-functioning economies.

Is it good for human beings to be cosseted, to live in a welfare state, protected not only against external risks, but also against the consequences of their own mistakes, incompetence, or even laziness, and to be deprived of the fruits, not only of luck, but also of their own efforts? No one really knows. But throughout history, the individual alone seldom created the conditions under which he lived. In the material world, the major determinants for these were the forces of nature, wars, diseases, and cultural and economic structures; in the spiritual world, the explanations were found in destiny and in the will of God (or the gods). For centuries, pride was a vice, humility a virtue. It was liberal capitalism, after all, that created the slogan "Everybody is the smith of his own fortune."

And is the common man in the Nordic welfare state any more cosseted than middle- and upper-class children, all over the world, who receive the best education money can buy? Any more cosseted than those who pay handsomely for the services of the best financial experts, lawyers, and psychiatrists, for the same kind of advice that social workers and job stewards give to the lower classes

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for free? Why is the pampering of the well-off good, but the protection of lower-class citizens by the welfare state bad?

Incidentally, cossetting and leveling-out in the Nordic countries should not be overrated. Even there, it is still much better to be the leader of a typical private enterprise than an unskilled worker, both in terms of income and esteem. And a university professor is much better off than an unemployed recipient of welfare benefits. Inequality still prevails, although it is modified in comparison with most other countries.

The realities of the Nordic countries belie many of the myths about them at large in the world today. Unfortunately, such myths tend to dominate much of the international debate on the Nordic social experiment. Yet, despite our stubborn rejection of what we believe to be untenable postulates, misunderstandings, and accusations, many Nordic people are increasingly concerned about the future of our welfare states—but not because we worry that the human values of our young people will be destroyed, or that the state will increase its control, or that trade unions and social-democratic parties will conspire to "sneak" communism in through the back door.[5] What we are deeply worried about are the signs of a declining legitimacy of the welfare state, its financial functioning, and the internal dynamics that threaten to dissolve its very foundation. We are afraid, too, that the Nordic governments, in their steady expansion of the public sector, have overrated the willingness of individual citizens to contribute their share to the communal pot. We are concerned that, although everyone apparently continues to support the expansion of the welfare state, many citizens nonetheless undermine both the public sector and state laws by their sophisticated, albeit legal, evasion of taxes and their calculated exploitation of social services. These worries and fears are what this essay is about.

THE NORDIC VERSION OF THE WELFARE STATE

"Nordic social welfare" does not consist of social security and social service alone. Certainly, the folk high-school movement, the unusual extension of farmers' and consumers' cooperatives, the high rate at which wage-earners organize, the unity of the trade unions, and other factors, may have done more than social legislation to eliminate poverty and promote equality. Moreover, the geographic

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and demographic conditions in the Nordic countries favor decentralized agricultural and industrial structures, and these pull in the same direction. Yet it is beyond dispute that the Nordic countries are regarded as "welfare" states primarily because of their comprehensive systems of cash benefits and their extensive public systems for the delivery of free services in the areas of health, education, and welfare. Not the totality, it is nevertheless the core of Nordic welfare.

In many respects, the cash benefit and the service delivery systems differ from one Nordic country to another; at the same time, there are other countries, even geographically remote, with systems very similar to those in Norden. The New Zealand system of cash benefits, for example, is more similar to the Danish system than is the Finnish. And although the Nordic countries as a whole are among the biggest spenders per capita in the world, there are substantial differences between them. Iceland, for example, spends much less per capita on collective consumption than the other Nordic countries and even the United States (Table 1). Finland and Norway are on a par with Germany and the Netherlands. Denmark and Sweden, on the other hand, have had steep increases in these expenditures since 1965, so that by 1980 they topped the list. As for the number of people employed by government, the Nordic countries are on a par with the United States.[6] Nevertheless, there is an undeniably distinctive Nordic version of social security and service. Its uniqueness, however, consists neither in the size of the nonmarket sector, nor the level of benefits, nor the costs of social security, but in the way the services and benefits are organized, the rules of entitlements, and the absence of a connection between the financing of provisions and one's right to them.

As social security schemes spread over Europe between 1880 and 1940, most countries on the Continent adopted the principles of Bismarck's "workingmen's insurance" as their basic model of cash benefits, including sickness and unemployment allowances and pensions, with public assistance as a subsidiary element.[7] Thus on the Continent and, remarkably enough, in Eastern Europe, the system of compulsory "social insurance"—which is partly an imitation of private (i.e., voluntary) insurance systems—became the main instrument for providing compensation for loss of income. The system was organized in branches according to the kind of risk involved (partly also according to the size of the risk), and was financed through

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TABLE 1. Government Collective Consumption as a Percentage of Gross Domestic Product

	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980
Denmark	12.3	15.1	20.0	24.6	26.8
Finland	11.9	13.8	14.7	17.5	18.6
Iceland	8.6	8.7	9.7	11.1	11.7
Norway	12.9	15.0	16.9	19.3	18.8
Sweden	15.8	17.8	21.6	23.8	28.9
Germany	13.4	15.2	15.8	20.5	20.1
France	13.0	13.1	13.4	14.4	15.2
The Netherlands	12.8	14.8	15.6	17.4	18.0
United Kingdom	16.6	16.9	17.7	22.0	21.5
United States	16.9	17.1	19.2	18.9	18.1

Source: National Accounts 1952-81. OECD 1983.

contributions from the insured person and his employer. Eligibility was conditioned by the payment of previous contributions. These principles have been modified over time, particularly as a result of the breakdown of many funds during times of inflation, by involving the state in financing (so-called tripartite systems).

The Nordic countries, along with a few others such as Great Britain and New Zealand, were reluctant to adopt the Bismarckian principles. The legislation adopted in these countries prior to World War I was rather unsystematic in its acceptance of compulsory social insurance, but as time went on, two systems evolved: the Beveridge system and the Nordic system. The former consisted of a comprehensive organization, but one without separate branches; contributions from the insured provided both a substantial part of the financing of the system and the condition for eligibility for social benefits. The Nordic system is characterized by nationalized agencies that are integrated into the governmental public sector and is financed primarily through general taxation; the right to receive benefits is not based on previous occupation, income, and contributions, but on citizenship. It is often called "people's insurance" as distinct from workingmen's insurance.

This model has found its clearest expression in the systems of "basic folk pensions" that have been enacted in all the Nordic countries.

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Deviations from the "pure version" are found, however, in the fields of sickness benefits and unemployment benefits, for example, where the rights to these are always dependent upon previous employment and sometimes on membership and on payment of contributions. Nevertheless, in most schemes, general taxation is still the major source of funding.

Differences certainly exist among the countries, with Denmark closest to the pure model, and Finland, as it was from the beginning, more continental or Bismarckian in its approach. In recent years, both Sweden and Norway have approached the continental model by instituting more contributions from employers and employees, Sweden proceeding the furthest through its introduction of a general supplementary pension scheme. The three dominant European social security systems—the Bismarckian, the Beveridgean, and the Scandinavian—have approached one another in the last two decades, yet their main features are clearly visible in social legislation.

The Nordic social security system, however, still has a distinctive character of its own. Its version of the welfare state owes its identity not only to its social security system, but also—and quite substantially—to the extensive public services that are at the disposal of the population, either free or at low cost. Here again, the way in which the systems of public services are organized is what distinguishes the Nordic system.

Most countries of the world have devised a wide variety of ways to organize such functions as medical treatment; care of the sick or the elderly; rehabilitation of the handicapped; the rearing and education of children; elementary, medium, and advanced education; research; counselling; alleviating the anxieties of those in personal crisis; and so on. Informal institutions such as family and other local social networks are involved in various degrees and with various external support. Formal institutions such as the church take up such tasks in their own ways. Private organizations or societies such as religious communities or the Red Cross may participate. In some countries, much of this is organized as private charity, and to various degrees, the services at times emanate from the market sector.

Yet, despite all the variations, one can discern in the Nordic countries' social security systems two characteristics that distinguish them from all other countries: their willingness to involve the central or local governments directly in the tasks, and the delivery of services to

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citizens either free of charge or quite inexpensively. This does not mean that the family has no functions or that no charity is exerted by religious communities; it does mean that the balance between public and private responsibilities in Scandinavia is different from what is typical in Central or Eastern Europe, for example, or in the Mediterranean area. It also means that the state in Scandinavia typically performs those tasks itself or by means of local authorities, instead of supporting individuals, families, organizations, or private businesses in their execution.

All Nordic countries have public health systems that provide free medical treatment and care to every citizen. Hospitals are financed totally through general taxation and are run by public authorities. General practitioners[8] are either publicly employed or conduct their practices primarily on the basis of collective agreements with public authorities. Each citizen, therefore, has access to free medical treatment, paid for by the authorities. In the United States, this is what is known as "socialized medicine."

Public schools and higher education are provided free of charge by public bodies; day nurseries and other institutions for children, at low charges. Social services for the sick, the handicapped, and the elderly include home-help services, home-nursing, meals-on-wheels, day centers, telephone chains, nursing homes, sheltered homes, and so on. Some services such as home-nursing and day centers are free, while others—room and board in institutions and home-help services, for example—very often are paid for.

At this point, it might be relevant to correct a misunderstanding, widespread among foreigners, that the high number of public employees inevitably means a high number of "bureaucrats." There are probably no more bureaucrats in Scandinavia than there are in other countries where huge industries, a labor force, and a large sector of tertiary production must be run. In Scandinavia, around 90 percent of public employees are teachers, or health or institutional personnel, work for the railways, are in the military, and so on. In other European countries, in contrast to the Nordic way, family members or religious and other voluntary bodies provide these services, sometimes by means of extensive public subsidies. In other countries, too, there is a greater inclination to involve employers or insurance bodies.

If we look for a common denominator, then, that unifies the Nordic countries in social security as well as in services, it seems to be

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that of a greater willingness than most other countries to use the public authorities—state as well as regional and local—as a tool to serve certain political targets such as security, the elimination of poverty, and equality in income and power. Other countries have similar aims, but look to different instruments than the state to achieve them. Still others are not averse to using the state, but do so in pursuit of other aims, for example, expanding their military establishments. The state, whether on the national, regional, or local level, is a tool. Like any other—a hammer, a dictionary, a missile—it cannot be used for each and every purpose. But it is at our disposal, to be used as we see fit.

The extremely relaxed attitude of the people toward their central government and public authorities is at the very heart of the Nordic welfare state. We do not, in fact, have many feelings toward the state at all: we regard it as something neither to be feared, nor respected, nor worshipped. The difference between our attitude and that of citizens of other countries is striking. It is impossible to discuss the organization of social services or the payment of compensation for loss of income in Germany, Belgium, France, or the United States without noticing that the suggestion of placing these in the hands of tax-financed public authorities is quite often a matter of passionate controversy. Other things being equal, decision-makers there prefer to go the route of private organizations or funds, businesses or self-governing institutions. This is not to say, however, that the average Scandinavian citizen, in his capacity as social client, approaches the bureaucracy of the public authorities in so relaxed a state. Dependency is a symptom of defeat, and asking for help is a recognition of that. Thus there will always be a hierarchy between provider and receiver, no matter who the former is.

Certainly, this relaxed attitude toward the state is more or less a general one—the attitudes of individuals, of groups, and of political parties being more diverse, even ambiguous. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of truth in it. In contrast to the European setting, where discussions on social policy issues regarding state responsibility and control tend to be protracted and contentious, such discussions in the Scandinavian setting are quite pragmatic, even where different political views are represented.

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The Rationale of Nordic Welfare

To comprehend the logic of Nordic welfare, it is necessary first to recognize the extremely high ranking that the concept of equality holds in the Nordic value system—which, of course, grows out of our conception of the relation between the individual and society. Many Nordic people are ambivalent about inequality. They prefer a market economy to socialism and understand that some inequalities of income and fortune are built into the former, both as a precondition for and result of it. Thus, if most of our economy is based on private enterprise, we have to accept the existence of inequality. Yet our acceptance is both reluctant and half-hearted: inequalities are a necessary evil, motivated by economic necessity and not by justice; people are neither rich nor poor because they *deserve* to be, but because the economic system demands it. This is a common position that does not prevent some who hold it—myself included—from thinking that inequalities are sometimes deserved.

The idea of inequality as being fundamentally unjust, however, has been strong enough to make it politically potent; politicians who want broad electoral support base their arguments on the demand for equality. If equality cannot be achieved in the market sector, then it can be obtained through public production or through redistribution of income by means of taxes and social security benefits. The justice of equality is an idea fundamental to the logic of Nordic welfare systems and impacts on their organization. It explains both our preference for progressive income taxes instead of risk-differentiated contributions, and for flat-rate or even means-tested benefits rather than allowances proportional to previous income. It also explains why we prefer comprehensive systems with broad coverage and why we have accepted state intervention in certain mechanisms, such as industrial training and higher education, that in a market system foster and extend inequalities.

Although the ideal of equality permeates all the Nordic welfare systems, the systems themselves do not constitute a unified, logically consistent whole. Finland, for example, has long been more willing to relate cash benefits to previous income than the other Nordic countries. Furthermore, the steps taken recently by Sweden and Norway to give supplementary pensions on top of the existing flat-rate "people's pensions"—thereby extending some of the inequalities cre-

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ated by the market system into the retirement years, where they have no economic function—have given the principle greater credibility.

The arguments that underlie the "pure Scandinavian version" of a social security system are as follows: A tie between individual compulsory contributions and individual rights means not only that some people acquire eligibility for provisions, but also, and necessarily, that some are excluded from such rights, primarily those outside the labor force or at its margins—that is, the most vulnerable and needy groups. Therefore, a parallel system will have to be established. Does such a dual system make sense? Will it not complicate administration and cause a distinction to be made that in practice will appear to be one between persons who are more deserving and others who are less so?

As soon as the systems become nationwide and comprehensive, the contributions will become costs of production and will therefore be included in the prices of commodities. Thus the burden will be carried by the consumers, not by the insurers, and it will become meaningless to attach individual rights to contributions. It will be impossible to distinguish between contributions or payroll taxes and indirect taxes. The whole tax system and the level of taxation will inevitably be adapted in order to govern the economic effects of the total tax system, taking the contributions into account. It makes sense, therefore, to integrate such contributions into the total system of taxation.

The argument for maintaining separate bodies of administration is effectively shattered. If such bodies in fact continue to exist—and some do—it is a matter of historical inertia. Their activities are subject to legislation and governmental regulations. They do no harm, so why trouble to abolish them?

From the point of view of social welfare, the main advantage of the system is its universal coverage. The mesh of the social safety net is so fine that few ever fall through the holes. From the point of view of economic policy, administrative simplicity and flexibility are its main advantages. The built-in rigidity of systems where one's rights today are based on contributions yesterday does not exist in the Nordic system.

One of the basic ideas behind the comprehensive Nordic social security systems is that no one is denied help when it is needed because of occupational status, sex, age, or low income. This idea also

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constitutes the major ideological background for public health, education, and social services. For example, the provision of medical services and care during illness or in old age is deemed to be too important to be dependent upon anything other than simply need. Wealth should not give one access to more competent doctors or better nursing homes. The most competent doctors should treat the most complicated diseases, no matter who suffers from them. The answer clearly is socialized medicine.

These arguments also hold for the socialization of the educational system—from elementary school to universities—of rehabilitation and training facilities, of day nurseries and nursery schools, and of nursing homes, home-help, and other services to the elderly. Some of these services, it is countered, could be provided by families and other social networks—to which those in favor of socializing them reply: "If you place responsibility for care of the sick or the old, for example, with such informal social communities, you make their care dependent upon membership in families or groups, and upon the benevolence of other members, which may in fact be humiliating. In addition, others without family and group affiliations may fall through the holes of this very large net. The only way to make the mesh fine enough to catch the smallest fish is to invest responsibility in the public authorities and make eligibility a right that every individual has in his or her capacity as citizen."

To my mind, the logic is convincing, provided that security and equality are the sole criteria for judging the system's effectiveness. When the standards of flexibility—in relation to changing tasks and circumstances—and administrative simplicity and efficiency, however, are brought to bear, it is less convincing, particularly when we take into account the fact that the quality of services may actually improve when they are provided informally and unprofessionally by the private sector.

One final aspect of the rationale of the Nordic system remains: the very strong arguments for placing income compensation and the provision of services in a comprehensive system. But to understand these arguments more fully, we must look first at others. For example, cash benefits—whether in the form of pensions, unemployment, sickness allowances, or public assistance—and health, education, or social services, are often substitutional or complementary. In certain cases, too little of a certain kind of provision may result in higher

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expenditures on others, such as when inadequate medical treatment or rehabilitation results in the need for disability benefits later on. Placing such provisions in a common organization allows a balancing of resources in different areas. Services are often complementary, for example, in rehabilitation, where medical treatment, vocational training, income compensation, and personal guidance go hand-in-hand. If these provisions are not under a common administration, rehabilitation can be a very wasteful and inefficient process. Thus the benefits of a network of substitutional and complementary relations in a comprehensive system are generally recognized.

These arguments apply uncommonly well in labor market policy, which was developed most notably in Sweden in the 1960s.[9] Gösta Rehn and other trade union economists developed the idea that in order to have price stability *and* full employment in a rapidly changing society, it would be necessary, above all, to have a highly adaptable work force. Therefore, a comprehensive system of social, educational, and vocational services would have to be provided, and at the same time, jobs created that are directed at low-employment areas where the risks of creating inflationary shortages are most limited. Such a system would guarantee that no one was left behind as the requirements of the labor market changed, and would also serve to moderate or even allay the fears that often are behind labor resistance to change. Labor has in fact shown little resistance to technological and economic change in the Nordic countries, and at least in part, the systems of social security and services deserve credit for that.

So far the arguments behind the Nordic system seem to be quite strong. Why, then, do we worry?

THE IRRATIONALITY OF NORDIC WELFARE

The Nordic welfare states are not based upon any consistent philosophy regarding the relationship between man and society, nor were they founded upon any coherent understanding of the functioning or development of the society as a whole. Rather, the rationale behind the Nordic welfare state is of a practical, pragmatic, and fragmentary nature. That is, legislation to effect quality has been introduced in small pieces, and only measures that have an apparent, direct, and positive effect on the abolition of poverty and the pro-

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motion of equality are passed. Few efforts have been made, however, to analyze their ultimate impact on the general social milieu or the functioning of society, even where it appeared probable that a particular measure might eventually cause *in*equality.

We can see this in the narrowing of wage differentials, where the immediate effect was to foster greater equality in work-derived incomes. It has been argued, however, that the indirect effects of this policy down the road may be increased difficulties for groups of low productivity in finding jobs, thus pushing out of the labor market the handicapped, the elderly, or the less qualified.

For many decades, this piecemeal strategy seemed to work satisfactorily. It allowed the individual Nordic countries to develop somewhat differently while still retaining a common identity, and implied that the process of trial and error was quite consistent with the Nordic character. Indeed, the Nordic people needed no Bismarck or Beveridge to fashion their model.

Such pragmatism and lack of philosophy have generally been felt to be an advantage; they are probably the reason it took us so long to understand that while we concentrated our efforts on the construction of a formal system of service delivery and social security, the existing informal system of social networks was gradually being undermined. Certainly, this was caused by more than the development of the welfare system alone, since changes in family structure take place in all the industrialized countries. But there is no doubt that the development of the welfare system impacts on family structure and other social networks, as well as the other way around.

The problem is not confined to social security and services nor to the way these are organized in the Nordic welfare states. In an article entitled "What Comes After the Welfare State," James Robertson argues that

> the whole thrust of industrial progress has been to drive human activity out of the informal sector (in which the economic and social, and for that matter cultural, aspects of life were closely intertwined) into the formal sector (where social became separated from economic activity and consumption from production, where more and more activities became professionalized, and where economists could count money *[sic]* of what happened).[10]

The reason, rather, is quite simple: it was cheaper to produce meat, butter, beer, soap, cloth, and other consumer goods in factories than

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in households, so these activities moved from the informal to the formal sector.

Later, social functions and activities went the same way. Maintenance of subsistence, the care of the sick and the aged, training and education of children and young people, the physical protection and the development of their character and attitudes, tended to move from informal social formations—family, friends, acquaintances, local communities, and so on—to formal institutions. Yet these activities did not move from one sphere to another because there was a "market" for these functions, in which formal institutions could "produce" at lower costs than informal networks, but because the transfer of production in the economic sphere broke down the social cohesion of some of the smaller networks—the villages—and weakened others, such as the family. Many social needs thus went unmet, and the political issue became not one of changing the course of development, but rather one of whether people's needs would be ignored, and if not, what kinds of measures would best fill them. It was clearly this challenge, and the fear that unmet needs would give rise to unrest, that lay behind Bismarck's social reforms in the 1880s. The egalitarian, pragmatic, and fragmentary Nordic approach made it politically necessary to find solutions at an early stage of Norden's rather late industrial development. These solutions aimed at establishing a safety net of the finest mesh, one, that is, based on the broadest unit of solidarity available—the public sector. This was in sharp contrast to other countries, where the units of solidarity were of more variable size, ranging from married (even unmarried) couples to religious communities or insurance schemes. This meant, however, that the number of social functions and activities that were transferred from informal social, partly voluntary formations to formal, professionalized, regulated, paid activities and institutions became higher in Norden than in most other countries. One could also say that the transfer took place with extraordinary speed.

The other side of the coin is now becoming more and more apparent, and the increased professionalization of child-rearing, the education of youth, the care of the sick and the aged, and of advice and comfort to the confused or suffering, is increasingly debated. Though the professional may, by virtue of his or her training and knowledge, help avert suffering and even tragedy, he or she may be incapable of imparting valuable emotional and personal qualities that character-

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ize informal networks at their best. But is there a real choice? Will reluctance to establish formal and professional services strengthen the capacity of informal networks? Or will it just result in unmet needs, misery, and suffering? Are there other ways in which informal networks could be strengthened?

Meanwhile, the financial problems of the welfare state are coming to a head, due also to the extreme formalization of services and in particular to the organization of social security and services in such very broad units. There is a distinct psychological difference between receiving economic, practical, and emotional support from a spouse, a relative, a friend, or a neighbor, and receiving assistance from an anonymous public institution. In the first instance, the possibility of abusing the assistance given, or to ask for more than the other person can in fact give, is narrowly constrained. Not so in the second instance. Similarly, there is a vast psychological distance between providing help to someone you love and paying taxes to the public system of social services.

Furthermore, the broader the systems, the greater the incentive to maximize one's share of the benefits pie. Obviously, the functioning and stability of a welfare system, whether it provides health services or cash benefits, will depend very much on whether its consumers, who are of course interested in high standards and benefits, are encouraged to consider also the efficiency, costs, and financial burdens of the system. So also is it essential that the taxpayers—who happen to be largely the same individuals in other phases of life—who are interested in low tax rates, be encouraged to become aware of the conditions of the sick, the unemployed, the elderly, and the system of education.

In a nonmarket system, it is up to the political institutions to balance these interests. But it is incumbent upon the various consumer groups also to balance these considerations in their own minds, else the pressures they exert upon the politicians will be at cross-purposes. And there is a further problem: at the same time as they demand expanded services, they may be depriving the politicians of the means to control this explosion; that is, they may be engaged in a tax-free underground economy. In many cases, the politicians will indeed be in a bind, since any increase in taxes to pay for the demanded expansion of services may increase the incentives to participate in the underground economy. By a marginal rate of income

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taxation of 80 percent—which is not at all uncommon in several income brackets in the Nordic countries—an untaxed dollar is worth five times the taxable one. This problem, which plagues all comprehensive welfare systems, is somewhat ameliorated in the contributory systems, where the link between the provision of services and the costs of eligibility are never far from the member's mind.

Thus the Nordic welfare systems are vulnerable in that their very aim for universal coverage, flexibility, and internal rationality has removed characteristics that could serve as reminders that the provisions are not paid out of a bottomless well, but by the citizen himself in his capacity as taxpayer. That factors which belong together economically, and which should thus also be psychologically connected, are systematically kept apart by the Nordic welfare system itself exacerbates the problem of the "free rider"—who is , after all, not an immoral abuser of the system, but rather a rational, sensible economic man.

Kept apart, too, by the efforts of the citizen to minimize his taxes and to maximize his share of the benefits pie are the threads of income and expenditures that the politicians must knit together. On the one side, we find individual evasion of taxes, whether as legal deductions or as illegal dodging, together with collective pressure on the political system to preserve or even extend the possibilities of legal tax evasion. On the other, we find that when people make decisions regarding extra work, whether to marry or divorce, whether their grown children will live at home or go out on their own, whether to buy a condominium or rent an apartment, whether to take care of their children at home themselves or take advantage of the day nurseries, and so on, they consider the impact of these actions on their access to cash benefits or public services. And almost as a corollary to pressure for the preservation and even extension of various tax write-offs, we find strong pressure *from the same people* for the extension of free services and social security provisions—and moral indignation at even the slightest cuts.

Politicians have been far more clever at counteracting such quixotic behavior when it comes to tax evasion than to service maximization. Tax control in all the Nordic countries has been increased—which is no easy task, considering the ingenuity of the citizens and their professional tax-advisers, who always seem to be one step ahead of the lawmakers in their attempts to improve tax control.

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And unfortunately, the latter are not supported by strong public opinion. On the contrary, *in the conflict between tax evaders and authorities, it is the evaders who get popular support;* the exploited hails his exploiter. The legitimacy of the tax system is deteriorating as the need for means to finance the welfare state is growing. Therefore the transfer of taxes to less visible sources has been the most important counteraction to tax evasion.

The last two decades have witnessed a return to payroll taxes and employers' contributions as a source of financing for many of the extensions of the welfare system, the most conspicuous example being the supplementary pension systems in Sweden and Norway. Such systems, with contributions and provisions tied together but with a considerable time-lag, are two-edged swords, since current consumption will always have to be taken out of contemporary production. People believe that the contributions they make are being set aside for their pensions, when in fact the monies are being used to fund the extension of other branches of the welfare system and perhaps also some investments in industry. The money that will later be used for their pensions will come from increased taxation at that time. The mechanism is really quite invisible, and it seems to function well psychologically. At least, this is a plausible explanation of what has happened in Sweden. There, payroll taxes have been adopted and the public sector expanded beyond that of Denmark, which still finances out of general tax revenue and has had an antitax Glistrup movement—which Sweden has thus far been spared.

But despite manipulations, the financing of the welfare system, in economies that are otherwise shrinking, is cause for increasing concern. And it is not the mere existence of a public deficit that is the problem. The welfare system, by maintaining internal buying power, aggravates the already difficult balance-of-payments problem. This may compel the governments to reduce internal demand in the form of private investment and consumption more than would otherwise be the case, particularly in small countries with extensive foreign trade. In that specific sense, and in that specific situation, welfare systems may be a burden on the national economies.

For Scandinavians with an egalitarian approach, the growth of the public debt is an additional cause for concern since it enlarges the share that interest on the public debt will require of future taxes. Such "antisocial" income transfers are already very high. In Den-

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mark, the interest paid on the public debt already amounts to twice what is spent on old age and disability pensions, or three times the cost of unemployment benefits, or ten times the outlay for public welfare benefits. If the public debt continues to grow at its present rate, within a few years the income that will be transferred from the *poor* to the *rich* will more than surpass the transfer from the rich to the poor under the welfare system.

Furthermore, there is growing doubt that additional increases in the welfare systems will in fact promote equality. On the contrary, *in*equality seems to be promoted, as those in progressively higher income brackets are better able to evade more and more taxes legally. And those who take the greatest advantage of such services, again, are at progressively higher income levels. These redistributional effects become more and more "horizontal" as one's needs change in the different phases of life, and less and less "vertical"—that is, redistribution from the rich to the poor. It does seem possible, however, to expand the welfare system to a certain point without getting into conflict with existing functional social networks, and as long as these systems can coexist, pressure on the welfare state is thereby limited.

An example of this is the family's continued financial support of its young adults after they have reached eighteen, the age after which parents are no longer required to support their offspring. Until recently, this was standard behavior in all the Nordic countries. Lately, however, increasing numbers of young people are going to the welfare office on their eighteenth birthday, arguing that, since the legal financial duties of their parents have ceased, it is now the obligation of the public to support them. In most cases, these young people are willing to work—if there is any work available—so it is not a matter of abuse. As long as youth unemployment is high, some of these young people will have to be supported by someone else. And today, many people do feel that the public has a responsibility toward these young people and would consider it immoral if the welfare offices refused to help. Yet, if the authorities help, they are in effect rewarding one kind of behavior—asking for public support—as against another—seeking support within the family. We can be sure that more and more young people will flock to the welfare offices (those who don't will feel cheated, and others may pity them or regard them as ridiculous), and that a consequent weakening of the family and an expansion of the welfare system will take place. But *not* to help these

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young people would saddle them with the burden of an economic situation over which they have little influence and no control.

There are many other examples of competing patterns of behavior, a good deal of them family-related: housewives who work at home and housewives who work outside the home; married couples and unmarried couples; families that take care of their aged parents, and those that do not; parents who bring up their children themselves at home and others who leave it to institutions. The authorities cannot possibly remain neutral, so that no matter what they do, they will affect the pattern of behavior, and eventually some will have to suffer for it.

The rationally founded welfare state has a built-in contradiction: if it is to fulfill its intended function, its citizens must refrain from exploiting to the fullest its services and provisions—that is, they must behave *ir*rationally, motivated by informal social controls, which, however, tend to disappear as the welfare system grows.

This is not to say that a "welfare state mentality"—in which the person who receives benefits sees himself not as a "citizen with rights and duties, but [as] a client, a recipient of aid and services waiting to be told what to do rather than doing what he wants and not waiting for official permission"[11]—is developing among those receiving cash benefits. On the contrary, there are increasing numbers of people who know their rights and duties quite well. The welfare state is expanding not because people are passive, resigned, and humble, but because they are aware and well educated. The welfare state's traditional clientele has been "normalized," owing primarily to prolonged high unemployment, not to high benefits. It is not income transfers to "social clientele" that have caused public expenditures to expand in the Nordic countries, but the ever-increasing social and educational services, which are used by the whole population. Any university graduate can pump more out of the social finances than most welfare recipients.

So the problem is not primarily the "mentality of dependency"—although this certainly exists—but rather that weakened social networks, a phenomenon widespread in the Western world, cause fewer conflicts in the welfare state, where the public sector readily takes over. Like a vicious circle, this itself tends to speed up the dissolution of networks and extends the public sector even more. This flexibility, this ease of response, has become a threat to the welfare state itself.[12]

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The relative social harmony and tranquil development of the Nordic welfare state in earlier years held in check the latent dynamics that were at that time already incorporated in the model. This was true of Sweden and Denmark up to around 1970, and somewhat longer in the other countries. But these dynamics were released by the profound social changes of the last decade and now threaten to undermine the Nordic welfare system, unless equally profound changes in its structure are made in time. The explosive development that has taken place in Denmark during the last twenty years clearly illustrates this.

The Social Upheaval in Denmark and the Expansion of the Welfare System 1960-81

Twenty years ago, probably no one in Denmark would have dreamed of, let alone foreseen, an expansion of the welfare system during the next two decades such as has taken place. Collective consumption rose from 13 to 28 percent of the GNP, social transfer incomes from 8 to 19 percent of private incomes,[13] taxes from 23 to 45 percent of GNP, and public employees from 15 to 31 percent of the labor force. This enormous expansion of the public sector took place without being planned by anybody, without being decided in advance by any responsible government organ, and, I dare say, without being decided by any political party in power—not even the Social Democrats, who have held the reins of government for most of that time.

Certainly, I do not mean that decisions were not made. Of course they were. Every piece of legislation was voted on, and each bit of expenditure appropriated by the responsible political authority, whether on the central, regional, or local level. In fact, thousands of elected officeholders from all parties were involved in the millions of single decisions that in the aggregate shaped the development of the welfare state in Denmark. And although almost every decision was properly prepared and evaluated, most were thought to be rather imperative. You do not refuse to establish a nursing home when the bedridden aged are left alone at home, nor deny a grant for a kindergarten when the alternative is to have four-year-old children left to fend for themselves all day. That is why several hundreds of independent local authorities made the same decisions simultaneously, regardless of political affiliations. But nobody worked out a blueprint

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of the total development. The general course was determined, not by putting up an aim and choosing a way, but by millions of single decisions that together fashioned a result which was unknown in advance and astonishing in retrospect. Each political decision was an answer to challenges that were created outside the political sphere, by social changes reflecting the changing behavior of the citizens. The overall development of the society governed the decisions of the political institutions—not the other way around, as politicians prefer to believe. In the political assemblies, ideological statements of all kinds were presented and defended. But in the end, they all made the same decisions, no matter which party had the majority. By making decisions that presented themselves as imperatives, the politicians in effect decided nothing. The political authorities reacted passively and mechanically to the social revolution that was taking place around them. In this way, perhaps, they accelerated the changes, but not because they wanted to do so. Most Nordic politicians see themselves in the rather modest role of provider of public services rather than as an architect of social development.

The social changes wrought in Denmark during the last decades have many different faces, but a common denominator is the dissolution of a number of social networks, especially families. Table 2 shows clearly what has happened. In the past two decades, Danish women gave up their traditional role as housewife and joined the work force. Whether they did so as a matter of choice is still ardently disputed. The fact is that the number of women working in the home decreased from 829,000 in 1960 to 250,000 twenty-one years later. These figures underrate the immensity of the change, since the overwhelming majority of those who are still at home are over forty-five years of age, most of whom will enter the population of pensioners in the years to come. Women with children generally enter the work force, and nearly half the married women work part-time. Parallel to this change of sex roles, there has been a revolution in behavior regarding marriage and family patterns. Between 1960 and 1981, the number of marriages decreased from 36,000 to 26,000 per year, while the number of divorces increased from 7,000 to 14,000. Cohabitation of single persons is also on the rise: half a million Danes live this way, corresponding to one fifth the number of married persons. These changes reflect more a weakening of social control around family and marriage than an increase in immorality.

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TABLE 2. Danish Women in the Labor Market—Scope and Consequences (in thousands)

	1960	1970	1977	1981
Total population	4,585	4,921	5,080	5,124
Housewives	829	683	397	250
Women in labor force	616	844	1,048	1,080
Public sector employees (both sexes)	302	478	684	834
Private sector employees (both sexes)	1,732	1,815	1,668	1,564
Unemployed (both sexes)	30	17	185	276
Population over 62[1]				
Living with spouse	441		520	
with children	14		11	
alone	150		282	
alone and handicapped	12		40	
in institutions	8		48	
Total	607		813	
Homehelpers	5		17	23
Day institutions for children	43	85	175	257

Source: "De ælders vilkår," report no. 2 of the Commission on the Elderly, 1981.
[1]From studies in 1961-62 and 1977.

Although the woman has been relieved of some of her household duties by changes in food production and the introduction of many laborsaving household devices, and although many wives have assumed the heavy burden of two jobs—one in the home, the other outside—the family is in fact unable to perform its previous functions as well as it once did. Many of these functions—and not just the concrete ones of child care, but also the less tangible tasks of giving advice and comfort in critical situations, relieving the isolation of the aged and giving them a place in a meaningful social structure, preparing children and young people for adulthood by teaching them norms and practices and acquainting them with the world of adults—have been taken over by the professional staffs of the public sector, above all the institutions of health, education, and welfare. The very flexibility of the welfare system made the take-over easy, insofar as there existed institutions that could handle the most urgent of these functions. In this way, the number of home-helpers quadrupled and the places for children in day care grew sixfold.

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But can these institutions perform the same functions, provide the same kind and quality of service, as the social networks? Or, have they rather restructured and redefined these functions, and in so doing, robbed them of an important element? The schools were instituted originally to provide knowledge and intellectual understanding, not family care; hospitals were meant to provide treatment for medical conditions, not those that the absence of stable social structures create; home-helpers were intended to care for impaired older people and prepare their meals, not provide a stimulating environment full of challenging opportunities for their remaining potentialities. And neither the schools nor the hospitals have been changed to meet the requirements of their new tasks. Because the public services and institutions cannot fulfill these other functions, there must inevitably be dissatisfaction with the service, which even an increase in funding will not be able to ameliorate. Nevertheless, it will be mistakenly met by what is likely to be an unending expansion of the institutions' staffs.

What are the cause and effect of this process? Some maintain that the former was the expansion of service, and the latter, the weakening of the family and other social networks. If taken literally, this statement is untrue. Yet, in the sense that the flexibility and responsiveness of the public sector helped speed up the changes, there is probably some truth in it. If the political authorities had not rushed to build more day nurseries, schools, and nursing homes, and to provide services to the elderly, the exodus of women from the home to the labor force could not have taken place so quickly, at least not without bringing considerable pain to children, the sick, and the elderly, or increasing substantially the burden of carrying two jobs for married women who went to work. The social costs would have been painful and visible, and presumably would have delayed and prolonged the change and deprived it of its revolutionary character. This is indeed what happens in countries with less responsive systems of social services.

Is the whole process, then, simply one of women leaving their duties at home, to be hired by public authorities to perform these same jobs, only with the differences that they do it less well and are paid for it? Of course it is not that simple. Other changes are associated with the revolution in the role of women, particularly the drastic elevation of the level of education in the population generally.

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If we consider the sectors that were strengthened by the growth of the labor force from 1960 to 1981, we find that day institutions and the care of the elderly absorbed 25 percent; hospitals, 12 percent; and the education system (staff, not pupils), 27 percent. The remaining 36 percent were at the disposal of the rest of the economy. The rise in unemployment since 1974, however, outweighed most of this increase in the supply of manpower.

The biggest extra consumer of labor was the education system, resulting in a substantial increase in the average number of years spent on the schooling of each citizen. Most people regard this as not only a desirable but a necessary development in a fast-growing, high-technology society. Moreover, the Danish system of education in 1960 lagged internationally—if measured by average length of stay in the school system, for example—so that even with the added years of schooling, Denmark has only just caught up to most other well-off nations.[14] Statistically, this points to fast growth in the public sector, but it is scarcely a more onerous burden on the national economy than education systems of the same size in countries where such systems are wholly or partially organized in the private sector.

But a legitimate question is whether this system of education adequately responds to the needs of the society and its citizens, or whether, in the words of David Gress, "amateurism, the refusal of the teachers to teach with authority, the inculcation of antibusiness values, and the rejection of history have all weakened the public schools."[15] Nevertheless, I see no clear connection between the scope of the welfare system and the quality of the schools.

THE FUTURE OF NORDIC WELFARE

There can be no question that in terms of the abolition of extreme poverty, the promotion of equality, the creation of self-respect among ordinary and working-class people, the creation of security as the normal mental state and the consequent weakening of resistance to social and technological change, the welfare state is a success. These are achievements to which it has contributed a great deal. Nevertheless, the Nordic welfare state is in crisis, but not because we have found that too much welfare is bad or because the welfare state entails too much state control. The crucial issues of the welfare state today are rather legitimacy and financing.

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The problem of legitimacy is not tied to political behavior. So far, the parties rebelling against taxation have been unable to attract mass popular support. In Finland and Sweden, they have not yet emerged in any election; in Norway, they have only slight support; and even in Denmark, the Glistrup party seems to be fading away. It is difficult to trace any clear signs of illegitimacy through the political process.

The core of the crisis is that the ordinary citizen not only openly and without compunction takes part in the underground economy and exploits the system of public services, but also hails others who do, and considers any attempts by the authorities to restrain this tendency as an infringement of his rights. That expenses have to be financed is accepted logically but denied emotionally. The Swedish economist H. Akerman calls this phenomenon the "Christmas Eve Theorem": If a Swede must choose between improved hospital standards and a trip to Mallorca, he will take both.[16]

These difficulties exist not only in the Nordic countries but in those with weak welfare systems as well. And during the current economic depression, public deficits can be found everywhere in the industrialized world. But the size of the public sectors and the anonymity of the sources of finance, which are hallmarks of the Nordic welfare systems, undoubtedly make solutions more difficult than in most other welfare states. Furthermore, the built-in dynamics of the systems make it impossible to continue without modifying them substantially. If changes are not made, we will come to a point where the cash benefits can no longer be financed, where chaos will engulf the welfare systems—and we will probably have to pay for our neglect with a severe political backlash. How, therefore, can the Nordic welfare state be reconstructed so that the dynamics are removed or weakened, yet the fundamental principles of solidarity not sacrificed? I take for granted the aim of preserving the fundamental principles, although I know that in other areas of the Western world, such ideas are politically controversial. The Scandinavian political parties may disagree on the extent and the nature of the necessary modifications, yet all the major political parties are unanimous in their wish to safeguard their version of the welfare state.[17] No party in any Nordic parliament, not even Denmark's Glistrup party, questions the system of publicly owned schools and universities, hospitals and nursing homes. In all the Nordic countries, the bourgeois parties have partici-

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pated in recent years in the government, but none has attacked seriously the fundamental principles of the welfare state or even argues for substantial reductions in the public sectors. Yet, although the Nordic welfare state is no longer a special Social-Democratic issue, this does not prevent one political party from accusing the others of destroying the welfare state.

To find a solution we must first of all determine whether our acute financial problems are due to the current economic crisis or to the structure of the welfare state. If we return to full employment (and bring our balance of payments into equilibrium), will the public debt disappear, and will it be possible to abate the pressures for higher taxes without reducing public spending drastically? If the answer is "yes," we have found as well a way to reduce the problems of legitimacy. Unfortunately, the answer is "no"—at least in Sweden and Denmark. In neither can the present rate of collective consumption be continued without taxes being raised or additional financial sources invented. Thus an economic policy aimed at improving employment will reduce the problem, but not enough to obviate the necessity of restructuring the welfare system. Let me emphasize that the "villain" in this calculus is not cash benefits, such as unemployment allowances or welfare benefits, since these surely will diminish as employment increases, *but the expansion of the collective consumption of services.*

The next step is to consider whether smaller adjustments—the correction of administrative and technical failures—will be sufficient to cure the system. We could, for example, structure the wages of civil servants and other public employees so that there would be increased incentives for efficiency, and introduce better planning and budgeting techniques, a higher degree of financial responsibility for each unit, and so on. Measures that range a bit wider would be the transfer of financial sources from visible taxes, such as the income tax, to less visible ones, such as the payroll tax and other indirect sources.[18] However, although technical "fixes" spare politicians the pressure for lower taxes, unfortunately, no similar technical tricks have been invented for expenditures. So there will always be votes to garner by promising more and better services as long as there are no other brakes on the claims, and technical solutions will prove to be insufficient to break the dynamics.

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Such technical changes can probably postpone the breakdown of the system. There is the danger, however, that higher efficiency and improved powers of taxation will result in great claims for more services. So although the backlash will be postponed, when it does occur, it will do so much more dramatically, unless the breathing space is used to prepare and carry through further reforms. Will Sweden be the first example of that?

We seem to come back ineluctably to the fundamental problem of the legitimacy of the welfare state. One cannot escape wondering whether we have not built our Nordic welfare state on an unrealistic notion of man as an altruistic creature, who of his own accord, and without external pressure, is willing to sacrifice a fair amount of his own wealth for the benefit of anonymous fellow human beings. Many citizens of course have these qualities, but perhaps we have overrated their capacity for altruism. We may in fact have passed the critical threshold.

If so, the future of the Nordic welfare state boils down to this: we have to restore a clear psychological connection between rights and duties, or the welfare state will break down. Such a clear connection, however, can only be established by reintroducing ties between contributions and eligibility—that is, the principle of insurance—or by confining the major responsibility of solidarity to smaller units of social formations, where neither the contributor nor the recipient is anonymous, and where, consequently, a system of informal social controls can be established. The last option seems to me to be worthy of consideration, above all, because it should be possible to establish a system of smaller units without consigning the most vulnerable members of society to perpetual misery. There may be several ways of doing that.

One of the most attractive possibilities is to decentralize the whole system of delivery of services by putting them in the hands of local authorities, who would be completely autonomous, within wide limits, to determine the priority of different services, the standards for these services, and the way they are produced. Besides giving them full financial responsibility, this arrangement implies that it is legitimate not only to pay professionals for their services, as we now do, but also to use private organizations or families in mutual assistance arrangements. Experiments that involve people in giving and not merely receiving could very well make local citizenship a reality. In

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such a system, the central government's role will be primarily to establish a system of grants to equalize local differences in need and financial resources.

Ideas of this kind are equally unpopular among radicals of the Left and the Right, who would not be sorry to see the welfare state break down. But, interestingly enough, ideas about decentralization of the public sector and a higher degree of private involvement in welfare activities—without having to resort in large measure to philanthropy—have simultaneously been presented by moderate liberals and conservatives and by left-wing Social Democrats.[19] The bulk of Social-Democrats, however, seem unprepared to make decisive changes, simply because it is difficult and painful to give up the idea of the central government as the very best tool to be used in creating and maintaining the welfare state, particularly when, for several decades, it has been used so successfully.

ENDNOTES

[1]E.S. Einhorn and John Logue, *Welfare States in Hard Times* (Kent, Ohio: Kent Popular Press, 1982).

[2]"Rear party," *bagtrop* in Danish, means the part of the army that comes last. In this context, it means those whose mental capabilities, energy, and initiatives are modest.

[3]Folk high schools, which emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century, are boarding schools for adults who do not qualify for any profession. The courses normally run for six to eight months and include history, literature, issues of contemporary society, and so on. The folk high schools were of enormous importance for the farmers' movement and spread from Denmark to other Scandinavian countries.

[4]Harold S. Wilensky, "Democratic Corporation, Consensus and Social Policy," in *The Welfare State in Crisis* (OECD, 1981).

[5]See, for example, David Gress, "Daily Life in the Danish Welfare State," *Public Interest,* Fall 1982, and Sven Rydenfeldt, *The Decline of the Swedish Welfare State: A Study in Black and Scarlet* (Athens: 1981).

[6]Francesco Forte, "Labour Market Development and the Need for Broader Policy Horizons," in *The Welfare State in Crises.*

[7]See, for example, F.A. Ogg and W.R. Sharp, *Economic Development of Modern Europe* (New York: 1936).

[8]The term "general practitioner" needs to be distinguished from "hospital doctors," who are specialists paid by the public hospitals, some of whom take private patients in addition to their hospital duties. General practitioners (family doctors) do not work in hospitals; they treat less serious conditions themselves and refer complicated cases to hospitals.

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[9]Trade Union and Full Employment. Report to the LO-Congress (Stockholm: LO [Association of Trade Unions], 1951). See also Jan Johannesson, *On the Composition of the Swedish Labour Market* (Stockholm: LO,1983).

[10]James Robertson, "What Comes After the Welfare State?" *Futures,* February 1982.

[11]Gress, "Daily Life in the Danish Welfare State."

[12]John Logue, "The Welfare State: Victim of Its Success," *Dædalus* 108 (4) (Fall 1979): 69-87.

[13]The rise in income transfers is mainly due to the increase in unemployment and should not be considered as an expansion of the welfare state as such.

[14]According to the OECD, full-time school enrollment in the fifteen- to nineteen-year age group is 57.4 percent in Denmark, which corresponds to that of France, but is below that of Belgium, Canada, Finland, Norway, and the Netherlands, not to mention Japan (71.4%) and the United States (75.0%).

[15]Gress, "Daily Life in the Danish Welfare State."

[16]Henrik Åkerman, *Julaftonsteoremet* (Stockholm: Rabén and Sjögren, 1976).

[17]John Logue in his article is of the same opinion.

[18]Wilensky, in "Democratic Corporation," recommends this as an appropriate technique for solving the financial difficulties of the welfare state.

[19]*The Future of the Welfare State: Remaking Social Policy,* edited by Howard Glennerster (London: Fabian Society, 1983).

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Torild Skard and Elina Haavio-Mannila

Equality Between the Sexes—Myth or Reality in Norden?

A PARADISE FOR WOMEN," with paid employment, legal protection, social benefits, and political influence as well—this is an altogether rosy picture, and one that many people of the world have of the Nordic countries today. And it is true that the employment rates of Nordic women generally are relatively high, that their rights are assured by law, that they share in well-developed social security systems, and that they participate in political decision-making. Indeed, a woman was recently elected to the presidency in Iceland and another became prime minister in Norway. But *equality?* There is still far to go.

After a hundred years of organized struggle against the discrimination of women, equality between the sexes has become a commonly accepted ideology in the Nordic countries, an acceptance reflected in the establishment of a public equality policy and in the implementation of reforms to promote the ideal and improve the situation of women. Nordic societies nevertheless continue to be overwhelmingly patriarchal: men still hold most of the leading positions and the essential power and control most of the resources, and the masculine mind-set clearly dominates the culture. And, despite the homage paid to equality, women are generally considered to be inferior and are systematically prevented from developing their abilities and furthering their interests.

What is the actual position of women in the Nordic societies today? What are the tangible signs of progress? Has it come about through deliberate efforts to achieve equality between the sexes, or

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have other factors played a part? Why is there such discrepancy between the ideological commitment to equality and the real conditions of women and men? Are the egalitarian goals merely a form of lip service? Or, has the implementation of measures aimed at equality met unforeseen obstacles—and if so, what are they? Modern governments play an important role in assuring the welfare of their people, in the Nordic countries especially. But can public policy by itself, as set forth within the framework of Western societies, carry the burden of assuring equality between the sexes? The situation is a complicated one indeed, and we hope in this paper to shed some light on these questions.

The Nordic countries were traditionally poor, and for this reason, few of their resources could be devoted to social research. Thus we know little about the lives of Nordic women before the modern period. Even in these more affluent times, Nordic scientists and writers, who are predominantly male, show only slight interest in the situation of women. But we have learned a great deal about women's lives in the last few decades, and thus we will concentrate on the period after the Second World War, training our sights primarily on the political and economic spheres. These, we believe, are preeminently important in the study of women's issues, and the material that does exist makes possible, at least, a limited study. Patriarchal societies assume different forms, and the relationship between the sexes differs. As far as can be determined, the position of women varies within different sectors of the Nordic societies and from one country to the other.[1] Although women in the five countries have much in common, in some ways gender differences seem to be most marked in Iceland and Norway, and least in Finland, with Denmark and Sweden somewhere in between. Compared with women in other Western countries, Nordic women tend to have a stronger position in the political arena, while their situation in the family and economic life is more similar. But first, to understand the present, we must look briefly at the past.[2]

TOWARD FORMAL EMANCIPATION

All five Nordic countries are patriarchal and have been for at least a millennium. In the traditional agrarian societies, women as well as men had to provide for the family's subsistence, but women had the

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added—and main—responsibility for child-rearing and housekeeping. Woman's position in society was defined by the Christian church: she was, it said, by nature essentially different from man. A more accurate rendering might be that she was *inferior* to man, since she was subject to him and her role was to obey and serve him. The man was the master of the household, and by law, the women who lived there were under his guardianship. Women were, in effect, minors; as such, they could neither enter into legally binding contracts, such as marriage, nor make use of their property and income. And although women were excluded from political and administrative functions, they could nevertheless be punished for breaking the law.

Yet this rather serious lack of legal rights and political power seemed to interfere little in the actual lives of women, since, in addition to taking care of the children, they were necessary partners in the production of foodstuffs and clothes, and participated in animal care and other agricultural work. Women were, in fact, totally responsible for the independent farms when their men were away fishing or trading or working in the forests. As long as formal laws and regulations impinged only slightly on most people's lives, the real power situations of everyday life decided to what extent women were oppressed in practice.

The introduction of industrialization and new technologies altered irrevocably the ages-old agrarian society, and in some ways, worsened the conditions of women, because the industrial process, together with urbanization—which was a consequence of it—increased the differences between the sexes. By moving the production of goods out of the households and into workshops and factories, machine manufacture increased the distance between home and work. As the household gradually ceased to be the unit of production, traditionally female tasks, such as spinning and weaving, brewing and soapmaking, salting, pickling, and baking, were taken over by machines. The large enterprises that developed attracted men into them, and thus men expanded the range of their activities while those of women shrank—so much so, that by the first years of this century, many women were primarily occupied with housework and child-rearing in relatively isolated homes. Whether they actually owned the new means of production or only worked with them, the men earned the money, decided its use, and were mainly responsible for the family's

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financial needs. The modern pattern of man as breadwinner and woman as housewife was created.

For women, the consequences of the industrialization process cut across all segments of society but varied according to social class. Women in the lower classes had to support themselves or contribute as much as they could to the family income. Many unmarried women, often from the countryside, became housemaids in the towns, one of the most common occupations for women far into this century. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, women became factory workers, primarily in food and clothing industries, where working conditions were hard and they were paid considerably less than men. Married women frequently worked outside the home, cleaning, sewing, cooking, and baking for others. In addition to their paid employment, working-class women had to care for their families, so that their doubly burdened life must have seemed onerous indeed.

Yet the first demands for the emancipation of women came not from these women but from those of the middle class, women connected to families that had become well-to-do as a result of industrialization. These women did not carry out work that was vital for their subsistence or their family's and were completely dependent upon the financial support of their fathers at first, and when they married, on their husbands. For those who remained single, their brothers and brothers-in-law assumed the burden of their support. These women had little function in the home, since housemaids did most of the work; still less could they have a function outside the home, because conventions, laws, and the lack of education prevented them from earning a living at an occupation considered suitable for members of their class. Not unnaturally, many felt obliged to marry as the only decent way of maintaining themselves.

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, changes in certain laws, allowing women access to better education and to engage in business and enter some occupations, improved conditions somewhat, especially for unmarried women in the middle classes. These reforms, however, were instituted not for reasons of equality but rather for economic considerations. First, the numbers of single women increased markedly, particularly in the towns, as the marriage rate declined, and their support presented a growing problem to the men responsible for them. Second, to develop production and encourage the accumulation of capital, old guild and trade privileges

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had to be eliminated and free competition in the economy fostered—a liberalization, incidentally, that women also benefited from. Third, the introduction of new technology—the telegraph, the telephone, and the typewriter—together with the expansion of trade, created a demand for relatively unqualified, cheap labor. Women were considered particularly well suited to these occupations, and soon unmarried women from the middle classes were working as telegraph operators, shop assistants, and secretaries. Women with some education often became primary school teachers or midwives.

These years saw the beginnings of the feminist movement in the Nordic countries. Its first stage, a preparatory, ideological one, saw a few individuals breaking the long-standing silence by presenting, mainly through different literary forms, the oppression of women. Their works demanded intellectual and emotional emancipation, respect for women as such, and equal rights with men. Many of these works encountered strong resistance, and the intense debates that developed around them had the fortuitous result of spreading feminist ideas.

The movement's second stage began with the establishment of feminist organizations in the five countries during the last part of the century. At that time, the central political institutions were gradually extending their range of activities, and women realized that if they were to influence the shaping of society, they would have to organize—which they did in different ways, in conformity with their backgrounds. Middle-class women began by creating special women's rights organizations that worked particularly for political rights for women and access to higher education so that they might qualify for certain positions. Later, a number of other female and feminist organizations, mainly vocational, social, and religious, were founded. This period also saw the establishment of special women's organizations affiliated with the bourgeois political parties. Working-class women had much less energy to spare; they did, however, unite in trade unions and in women's unions, but mostly in unions that included both women and men, since the struggle to improve the conditions of *all* the working class generally took precedence over women's demands. Working-class women wanted in particular better working conditions, shorter working hours, and equal pay. Later, women also joined the political parties active in the labor movement.

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The growth of the women's movement in the Nordic countries was a gradual affair, and because its modes of operation were law-abiding and peaceful, it avoided the dramatic events of the feminist struggle in other countries. Female activities can be easily confused with feminist activities—which entail primarily combating the discrimination of women and strengthening their position—but there were generally few organized feminists in the movement. At times, middle- and working-class feminists also came into conflict. On a number of important questions, though, various women's groups joined forces, and in the fight for women's suffrage especially, support came from all quarters.

During the last part of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth, the feminist movement addressed itself mainly to the central political authorities, asking for various public measures in support of women. The feminists were helped by liberal and socialist ideas on equality, and gradually the (mainly male) legislators gave women personal, economic, and political rights. By the end of the second stage of the feminist movement, before the outbreak of the Second World War, formal emancipation was essentially achieved. First unmarried women, then the married, became legally independent, and husband and wife were given formal equality in economic matters in marriage. Young women were permitted to enter high schools and universities, universal suffrage was introduced, and except for the ministry, women were permitted to enter the professions. (The first woman was ordained by the Lutheran state church after the Second World War; in Finland, strangely enough, women are still barred from the ministry.)

The feminist movement was crucial for the formal emancipation of women. But other forces—mainly technological and economic developments—during the same period brought about changes that probably influenced the everyday lives of most women more importantly. The mortality rate lessened significantly, and with the reduction also in fertility rates, women were relieved of the burden of numerous pregnancies and of strenuous and risky births, child care, and infant deaths. Women's work in the home was made easier through better housing, electricity and running water, new technical equipment, and ready-made necessities of life, but the demands for increased cleanliness in the home, better food quality, and more care in the rearing of children led to new demands on a mother's knowl-

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edge and time. Living conditions between the better-off and the working classes, however, and between the cities and the countryside, were considerably different, although not as great as in other European countries. And though it was difficult to improve working conditions outside the home substantially, women did benefit from regulations introduced into the workplace, particularly in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, where the labor movement was relatively strong.

The Nordic countries as a whole industrialized fairly late—the process generally making headway initially by the end of the nineteenth century—but Iceland and Finland, particularly, industrialized even later. Thus the nonagricultural labor force in Iceland and Finland was smaller during the first half of the twentieth century than in the other countries. Furthermore, up until the Second World War, the proportion of women in the nonagricultural labor force, despite the Great Depression, remained stable. The great majority of gainfully employed women were single, but it is entirely possible that the part-time employment of married women was insufficiently recorded.[3]

Although World War II brought no substantial changes in the position of Nordic women, the mobilization of great numbers of men in Finland and Sweden drew large numbers of women into the work force. The Swedes, however, did not engage in combat, while the Finns did so extensively, their forces suffering great losses and injuries. Both Norway and Finland were ravaged, but Finland alone had to pay reparations to the Soviet Union at war's end and furthermore received no aid through the Marshall Plan. These circumstances, together with late industrialization, helped create the image in the postwar period of the Finnish women as "poor, but equal"—the proportion of women in the labor force and in Parliament being noticeably greater than in the other Nordic countries.[4]

After reconstruction, all the Nordic countries shared in the economic expansion that took place in the Western world. The changes were rapid, especially in Finland and Iceland: the agricultural sector decreased while the service sector grew, and a considerable portion of the population moved to cities. The industrial sector, too, began to decrease as the countries moved into a postindustrial phase—first, Sweden in the 1960s; the others, in the following decade. By the end of the seventies, economic life was basically similar in all the Nordic

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states, and women were participating in employment and politics in the other countries almost on a par with Finland.[5]

A NEW WAVE OF FEMINISM

It was widely believed that, when the formal discrimination of women was eliminated, all would be well, and that it would then be up to the women themselves to exploit existing opportunities to the fullest. But when social scientists began studying the position of women in the fifties and sixties, it became clear that *formal* equality had not brought *real* equality, since the Nordic countries were much farther from having egalitarian societies than had been believed. In the first half of this century, it was found, the distribution of work and power between women and men had remained virtually unchanged.[6]

At the time when the women's liberation movement was sending shock waves throughout the United States and the rest of the industrialized world, social scientists in the Nordic countries began a gender-role debate, wherein they stressed the pervasion of traditional gender role stereotypes into almost every area of life, and argued that if women were to exploit fully the formal rights they had obtained, female and male roles would have to be altered. The debate focused primarily on the two roles of women—in the family and in the labor force—and how they should be combined.

The positions in the debate covered a wide range. There were, of course, the defenders of the "traditional" gender roles—the man as breadwinner and the woman as homemaker. Others, espousing a "moderate" position, held that women had the right to take their place alongside men in occupational and political life, but that their primary responsibility was child care and housekeeping. Social policy, they believed, should facilitate the combination of the two roles. The "radical" position demanded the recognition of dual roles for men as well, and wanted family tasks, job responsibilities, and social life as a whole to be shared equally by women and men.[7] Advocates of all sides, however, agreed that equality between the sexes had not yet been achieved and that people's attitudes would have to be changed and reforms implemented before improvement in the position of women could take place.

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Gender-role debates were heard most often in Finland and Sweden, but feminists in all the Nordic countries, as well as their supporters in the political parties, rallied. The policies of the parties of the left especially were influenced—certainly because equality meshed with the general philosophy of the Nordic welfare states, but as much, perhaps, because economic expansion called for the increased participation of women in the labor force. In the years that followed, Nordic governments made various attempts to strengthen the position of women. The Swedish Social-Democratic government, in 1968, was the first to claim its support of a radical equality policy and to propose measures to promote it.[8]

The advent of the new feminist movement at the end of the 1960s gave renewed momentum to efforts to further equality. There was an upsurge of feminist interest and activity, and women's questions became a society-wide concern. That this second wave of the feminist movement appeared at a time when opportunities for women in education and employment were expanding may seem somewhat of a paradox; it becomes much less so when seen in the context of the huge gap between the promises of equality and the everyday realities that confronted women. The movement was stimulated, too, by the international feminist movement and the antiauthoritarian revolts that erupted as the sixties ended.

The new feminist movement differed from the old. Where traditional feminists primarily sought equality and demanded a public policy to achieve it, the new feminists also sought power; where the old sought to achieve their aims mainly through consensus, the latter also recognized the necessity of conflict. Since the new feminists aimed at liberation from the total patriarchal social order, consciousness-raising became a basic mode of operation, and they thus organized in small, independent groups instead of the traditional hierarchical organizations. Many of the new feminists were fairly young, and although they came from the new middle classes, they took an anticapitalist standpoint, viewing the oppression of women as part of the capitalist society.[9]

The new feminists raised issues covering all aspects of women's lives. To solve the conflict between production and reproduction—between work outside the home and the traditional duties of women—and assure the economic independence of women, they demanded self-determined abortion, child-care facilities, paid employment,

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equal pay, a six-hour working day, extended parental leave, and so on. They called for participation on an equal footing with men in the decision-making bodies of society. Claiming that the private is political, they focused on the physical, psychological, and sexual oppression of women, and fought against prostitution, rape, and maltreatment. Some of these issues were new; others were old. Some transcended national borders; others pertained specifically to the Nordic milieus. In any case, traditional and new feminists soon began cooperating in various ways to promote their joint interests.

This second wave of feminism has taken somewhat different forms in the Nordic countries. In addition to the revitalization of existing feminist and, to some extent, female organizations in all,[10] many new women's groups have been created—mostly in Denmark, Iceland, and Norway, and partly also in Sweden—some of which are united in new national organizations. There has been, in addition, a proliferation of all kinds of independent groups and institutions: women's house groups, self-defense groups, female music bands, centers for maltreated women, feminist magazines, theatre groups, lesbian groups, groups for women researchers, women's culture festivals, groups of women in male-dominated occupations, female publishing houses, and so on. It is impossible to estimate the extent of these activities, but altogether the groups constitute a many-faceted feminist opposition to the established institutions.

There has been less new organizational activity in Sweden and especially in Finland, perhaps because the governments there are felt to be more capable of solving the problems. In addition, the exceptionally strong women's organizations affiliated with the political parties have been able to absorb much of the new impetus. In Sweden, women of the Social-Democratic party have made equality issues part of government policy. In Finland, where the differences between the sexes are less marked than in the other Nordic countries, the debate surrounding women's issues has been relatively weak in recent years,[11] but traditional attitudes toward women and feminism persist.

STILL FAR TO GO

What, then, has happened during the last decades? What is the position of women in the Nordic societies today? First, women now

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are considerably better educated, having benefited particularly from the explosive development of the educational system, especially during the sixties and seventies. The proportion of girls in secondary schools (ten to twelve years of schooling) is now around 50 percent, and many women go on to higher education. But with the exception of Finland, substantially more men than women earn a university degree. Girls spend less time on vocational training than do boys. Finally, gender differences show up sharply in the lines of study, girls being crowded into only a few areas, mainly languages and the humanities, health and social work, home economics, and shop and office work, while boys' choices seem unlimited: administration, technical and industrial fields, transport, agriculture, and forestry, as well as the natural sciences.[12]

Second, more women than ever before are in the work force. In the last two decades particularly, the number of women working outside the home has increased dramatically in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.[13] For a while, Norway was somewhat laggard in this regard, perhaps because urbanization was relatively slow there and because the traditional view that a woman's place is in the home was fairly widespread and strongly supported by religious groups. Today, however, the different Nordic countries have rates of female employment that are more or less similar. Furthermore, recent female recruits into the labor force are predominantly middle-aged married women, often with dependent children. Marriage (and child care) and gainful employment may have been mutually exclusive occupations earlier in the century, but clearly, they no longer are.

Several factors have played a part in increasing the numbers of women in the labor force. Certainly, one—and perhaps the most important—is economic expansion, with its growing need for labor. Others include high mobility in the population—which has led to increased living costs and thus a need for higher family income—and demographic factors, including the decline in marriage and fertility rates and the rise in divorce rates. Public policy has also done its share by providing expanded educational opportunities and child-care facilities.

Today, the rate of female employment in the Nordic countries is among the highest in the Western world: in 1980-81, it was 47 percent in Sweden, 46 percent in Denmark, 45 percent in Finland, 44 percent in Iceland, and 40 percent in Norway. In other West Europe-

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an countries, the rates average 30 percent, while it was 38 percent in Canada and 40 percent in the United States.[14]

Female employment, however, is not as extensive as it may seem. Between 40 and 50 percent of employed women in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden work only part-time. The statistics are incomplete, but when translated to a full-time basis, the differences between these and other Western countries are reduced. In Finland, however, part-time work is rare, so Finnish women make a relatively great contribution to the country's total labor input—but they spend less time on domestic work. In all the Nordic countries, part-time work for men is the exception.[15]

Although the relationship between fathers and children has changed somewhat, and men have assumed some responsibility for household chores, women still bear the main burden of housekeeping and child care—gainfully employed or not. The solution to carrying the double burden of work inside and outside the home has been to work part-time at the latter. Many women who are employed full-time in the labor force are in reality overworked.[16]

The labor market itself is divided by gender, the segregation so general that women and men rarely compete for the same jobs. Like their Western counterparts, Nordic women are concentrated in a small number of occupations, mainly service and clerical. Men, on the other hand, work in a variety of capacities in administration and management, in industry, construction, and transport. And the pattern has not changed, despite the flood of women into the labor force. Office work, teaching, and care-giving of various kinds in the public sector have been the main areas of increased employment opportunities for women.

A division of labor does not necessarily imply unequal working conditions, but a gender-segregated labor market does. Women are generally employed in low-wage, low-status occupations that for the most part have only poor opportunities for training. Perhaps most important, their chances of advancement are extremely limited; only a handful of women are in influential positions in any of the occupations.

Despite equal pay for equal work and the more secure employment in the public sector, occupational segregation finds its way into this area too; there are, however, more women in leading positions in this sector than in the private. Yet, in both cases, the percentages are

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quite low. And while segregation seems fairly similar in all the Nordic countries,[17] there is clear variation in the proportion of women in higher administrative posts. Finland's relatively high proportion compared to Norway's lower rate may be related to several factors: the increase in female employment in Norway is recent; Finland has had more women in the labor force for a longer time; the time spent on education is more equal for women and men in Finland than in the other Nordic countries; and most Finnish women work full-time.[18]

Despite increased opportunities for self-support and economic independence during the last decades, Nordic women often find that paid employment amounts to little more than tiring work and low wages. Although all the Nordic countries accept the principle of equal pay for equal work, and the gap between women's and men's wages has been reduced, the ideal is far from being achieved. Even when qualifications, job experience, and work hours—whether part-time or full-time—are taken into consideration, women are not paid as much as men, nor are their jobs as attractive. The considerable difference in the *total income* of women and men is attributable to the general downgrading of women's work, their relatively perfunctory job training, their briefer period of service, and the number of hours worked. In Finland, Norway, and Sweden, women on average earn one half to one third what men do[19]—and consequently have smaller social security benefits, since these are tied to income. Perhaps most sobering is the fact that many women are not employed outside the home and thus have no income of their own. The economic dependence of women is still very much with us.

New birth control methods, more widespread sex education, free or inexpensive public assistance with family planning, liberalization of abortion laws, and extensive public health services have enabled Nordic women to decide for themselves how many children they will bear and at what intervals. Denmark and Finland were the first to liberalize abortion, in 1970. Norway was the last to do so, in 1978, primarily because religious circles there were in strong opposition. The law, however, is now broadly accepted.[20]

After the postwar "baby boom," all the Nordic countries, with the exception of Iceland, saw a marked decline in the number of births (the average family now consists of about three persons). There has been widespread development of public services and financial aid to

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mothers and children, although the conditions under which these are given vary. The support, however, is not overgenerous, and women have no guarantee that they will not lose their status, independence, and income as a consequence of having children. As for paid parental leave, all the Nordic countries grant it, but vary in the amount of time allowed: Sweden, twelve months; Finland, eleven; Denmark and Norway, four; and Iceland, three. Given the shortage of child-care facilities, these periods usually prove to be inadequate. The leave applies mainly to women, but can be shared with the father, except in Denmark. And although increasing numbers of men now take leave, most do so for only a few days. In Sweden, between 12 and 15 percent of fathers take leave: in Finland, 20 percent. The sharing of parental leave gives the father a special opportunity to get to know the newborn, but it does not necessarily mean that he participates equally in its care.[21]

One of the most pressing problems is the lack of child-care facilities. The public authorities have been slow to accept responsibility for the care of preschool children, and it was only during the 1970s that a marked increase in the number of day nurseries and family day-care homes took place. By 1981 approximately one third of the countries' preschool children attended day nurseries or family day-care homes. Denmark, with about half of its children attending, had the most, and Norway lagged behind with only one fifth. Yet none of the countries has satisfactorily met the demand for various child-care facilities. And in spite of public funding, many families find it difficult to pay for such care, particularly in Denmark and Iceland, where parents are responsible for a considerable part of the cost.[22]

Third, women have greatly increased their participation in political decision-making. By the end of the Second World War, women were voting in numbers equal to men, but they seemed unable to translate this political weight into greater female representation in the elected bodies—which, in fact, never exceeded 10 percent and was usually considerably less. As the second wave of feminism rolled through the Nordic societies, however, women began to bring pressure to bear, in both local councils and in parliaments, for increased representation. That they were successful can be seen in Table 1, which shows the percentages of women in these two elected bodies and in cabinet posts as of November 1983.[23] Since female representation in the legislative bodies of other Western countries rarely ex-

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TABLE 1. Women in Elected Bodies and Cabinets

	Local Councils	Parliament	Cabinet
Denmark	21%	24%	15%
Finland	22	31	18
Iceland	12	15	10
Norway	24	26	22
Sweden	29	28	26

ceeds 10 percent, Nordic women have definitely outstripped their sisters in the West.[24]

Iceland has had exceptionally few women in its elected bodies during the whole postwar period. By the end of the seventies, they made up only 6 percent of the local councils and 5 percent of Parliament. Social and cultural factors have much to do with this poor showing, but the electoral system itself militates against the election of women. The number of elected representatives is so small—Parliament having only sixty members in all and the local councils mostly no more than five or seven—that the local political parties, of which there are several, rarely obtain more than one or two representatives. Thus women have practically no chance of being included. Frustrated by their seeming inability to elect women to office through the established parties, Icelandic women put up special women's lists in the elections of 1982 and 1983 and managed to get some of their candidates elected.[25]

Politics has traditionally been a male domain, and women have been "let in" only with great reluctance—a reluctance that grows as the importance of the duties and offices in question increases. The representation of women both in the parties and the elected bodies clearly diminishes in the upper echelons of the various hierarchies. There is an iron law at work that says, the *more* power, the *more* men. And not only are women relatively powerless in these organizations, but they find that the society's gender-based division of labor carries over into politics as well. Women, whether in parliament or in local councils, are mainly engaged in social, cultural, and educational affairs, while men concentrate on "harder" questions relating to agriculture, industry, and transport, and in the parliaments, on defense and foreign affairs as well.

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This lack of influence in political decision-making carries over to the economic sphere, where the picture is even gloomier. Very few women hold leading positions in the private or the public sector, and their numbers on the executive committees of the important economic organizations are quite small too. Nationwide agriculture and fishing organizations are still segregated, and women participate only minimally in employer and business organizations. Women join trade unions in great numbers, but election to executive committees is another matter. Seldom do their percentages in these bodies reflect their numbers in the unions. And even in trade unions dominated by women members, women are not the decision-makers.[26]

Not surprisingly, female participation in state-appointed committees, councils, and boards—where economic organizations, which are usually strongly male-dominated, are broadly represented—is disproportionately small. During the past few years, it was 7 percent in Iceland, 9 percent in Denmark, 10 percent in Finland, 16 percent in Sweden, and 27 percent in Norway. The relatively high percentage in Norway is the result of systematic efforts on the part of the government to increase female participation by means of a quota system.[27]

PUBLIC POLICY—IMPORTANT, BUT LIMITED

The report from the last decades is a mixed one, yet it appears that the relative position of women and men has not changed substantially. The living conditions in the Nordic countries have been altered in a spectacular way, and women have certainly been the beneficiaries of these changes—but so have men. Women have increased control over child-bearing, are better educated than before, and participate more in the labor force and in politics. Yet, their education is still rather second-rate, they still carry the main burden of household chores, can find employment in only a limited number of low-wage, low-status occupations, and are a distinct minority in decision-making bodies. In spite of the improvements, the gender-gap has clearly *not* been closed. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la meme chose*—males still dominate the society, even if the forms in which they do so are different.

But are we asking too much? How much progress can we really expect in a couple of decades, when it took a generation for women

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to gain the right to vote and a century to achieve formal equality? The tasks confronting us are as profound as those faced by the generations of women who preceded us. The passage to the third stage of the feminist movement will entail translating *formal* equality into *real* equality. It calls for a radical transformation of society as a *whole,* both its values and its economic, social, cultural, and psychological patterns, and will entail the redistribution of money and power equally between women and men.

Is it enough, however, to ask simply for "equality," when, as feminists point out, equality of *opportunity*—equal treatment accorded to women and men in education, in jobs, and so on—is a far cry from equality of *results?* Women and men, they say, are in different positions, and equal treatment will lead not to equality, but to *in*equality. In many cases, women will have to receive special treatment to improve their position.

No modern industrialized society has managed as yet to attain real equality between the sexes—nor will any, until the sufficient ideological and theoretical groundwork necessary to bring about equality is developed and insight into the concrete modes of operation of patriarchal societies gained. The main impetus for deliberate change lies in the feminist movement. The second wave of feminism is now more diffuse, but it it very much alive. And women's issues still figure on the agendas of all the Nordic countries, since various institutions—most of them public—have been established specifically to promote equality.

During the last decade, feminists have devoted special attention to politics, and on the whole, women have had relatively easy access to the political parties for several reasons. First, the Nordic societies are small and fairly homogeneous, and the values of justice, equality, and solidarity are strong. Thus, when women as a group claimed the right to participate in the political decision-making process, their claim was seen as legitimate. Second, self-interest dictated the acceptance of women; that they constitute half of the electorate did not escape the parties' notice. Third, the Nordic countries' multiparty systems provided several different channels of participation; and since the local party branches are quite small, open organizations (political activity not attracting very many people in general), it is not too difficult to enter these organizations and exert influence, either individually or collectively. Furthermore, the Nordic electoral sys-

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tem, which consists of proportional elections in multimember districts, lends itself to the election of women, more so than majority elections in single-member districts such as many Western countries have.

Yet, as we have seen, despite their large presence in the party organizations, the number of women in decision-making positions decreases as one moves up the hierarchy. To counteract this, some political parties, frequently liberal or on the left, introduced quota systems demanding the inclusion of at least 40 percent of each gender in all elected bodies. Where such quotas are adopted, the proportion of women in elective office rises dramatically, setting an example and pressing other parties, so that even parties opposing such systems tend to increase the number of women in important positions.

It is an open question, though, how far women politicians can promote feminist demands within political institutions dominated by men. The traditional views regarding women's inferiority and the relative unimportance of their needs and interests are still strong among men, despite their acceptance of the egalitarian ideology. And although political parties support women's issues publicly, particularly during electoral campaigns, the experience of female politicians has been that little is gained, in terms of glory or power, from pushing women's interests. In fact, they often find that such advocacy promotes negative reactions. One female legislator summed it up succinctly: "Either you talk about women's questions, or you are listened to." Thus, some female politicians prefer *not* to become engaged in women's issues, even when the feminist movement pressures them to do so. Others do, but often feel obliged to compromise in various ways with their male colleagues, as, for example, when they stress a "harmony model" for equality. In any case, women in politics and those elected to office, together with women's organizations, have kept women's issues alive in the public mind.

In contrast to their success in the political sphere, women have not improved their position in the economic sphere, and are still treated largely as second-rate labor. Nor have the majority of men increased their participation substantially in household chores. Equality between women and men in the labor force *and* in the total division of labor can only come about through extensive changes in the economic sphere and through the alteration of traditional roles. Men, it is still generally assumed, are not responsible for household chores or

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child-rearing; rather, each man has a woman at home to take care of these tasks so that he can return to work each day refreshed and relaxed. This assumption cannot but help to contribute to the secondary status of women, not only because the work they do at home has no value in the marketplace, but because, unlike men, theirs is unremitting toil; no one sees to it that *they* are refreshed and relaxed for the next day's work outside the home. The occupational roles of both men and women must be changed, the working hours for men reduced so that they can help with work around the house and child-rearing, and the wages, working conditions, and positions of women in the workplace improved. In addition, the economic importance of work in the home must be acknowledged.

Since the sixties, public authorities in the different Nordic countries have made various efforts to change the gender-based division of labor, but the results so far, apart from the increased participation of women in the labor force, have been meager. Patriarchal traditions and the market economy are so inextricably intertwined that basic change in the established pattern seems all but impossible.[28]

Male dominance in the economic sphere would seem to make improvements in the working conditions and wages of women extremely difficult. The concentration of power; business and industrial systems that largely elude public scrutiny and control; working conditions; and wage scales determined by management alone or by agreement between management and male-dominated unions—all contribute to maintaining the status quo. Furthermore, there is considerable economic interest invested in the existing structures, since profits and prices are based on the established work and wage distribution between women and men. Whole industries, for example, depend upon the exploitation of cheap female labor. The job market is highly competitive, more so of course in periods of recession, and many men want to avoid vying with women. They particularly resent the intrusion of women into "men's" jobs because of the threat it presents to their masculinity, camaraderie, status, and perhaps most of all, their privileges—which include higher wages, greater independence and influence, and personal service by women employees. That many men find housework "boring" and "degrading" is yet another reason for resisting change.

Women, however, are not entirely blameless; by continuing to seek "women's" jobs, they also play an important part in perpetuating the

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present unequal division of labor. Some, of course, are genuinely interested in such work, but others, particularly young women, mainly consider such employment because these jobs combine fairly easily with the role they expect to have as wives and mothers. The working conditions of some traditional "men's" jobs do not tempt women, being either too rough, or demanding too great an involvement in the workplace.

But the picture is not totally bleak, because a potential for amelioration does exist. The situation is changing rapidly, most notably in the widespread revamping of organizational patterns and structures. New leadership models are being called for, as well as more worker participation and democracy and a better quality of working life. Women can only benefit from such reforms. They stand to benefit, too, from the worldwide demand for improved productivity; employers are beginning to realize that women's talents have been largely underutilized if not altogether wasted, and that they can be trained for higher positions. And there are certainly men in the Nordic countries who are as committed as women to equality between the sexes. Some have been influenced by the feminist movement and understand the need for change, not only in their own roles, but for society as a whole. These men are often frustrated because of the difficulty in combining their work life with both the pleasures and the responsibilities of family life. Some object to the many occupational stresses and to their role as the strong and successful but emotionally barren and alienated achiever. A family life that has become more strained because of increased mobility, a lack of community services, and wives who are no longer exclusively devoted to their well-being, all combine to place men in the midst of the growing "care crisis" that threatens to engulf contemporary Nordic societies.

The possibilities inherent in an active public policy to promote equality are far from being exhausted. Measures that could bring about real equality need the political will of Nordic governments to be achieved. But seldom do male politicians give priority to women's special interests; usually, measures are adopted only when determined and stubborn pressure from feminists and their allies is brought to bear, and then they are generally slow, half-hearted, and insufficient. Norway's "equality grant" of a mere 20 crowns per hour to enterprises employing women in male-dominated occupations is a far cry from subsidies amounting to 250,000 crowns per worker giv-

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en to traditional "male" industries. Similar examples abound in the five countries.

Admittedly, there is controversy regarding the effectiveness of certain proposed measures to improve the position of women or to change gender roles. In others, such as educational policy, the difficulties have been underestimated. Here, it had been thought that coeducation in all courses in elementary school, the elimination of gender stereotypes from schoolbooks, the teaching of home economics to boys and shop to girls, and a general emphasis on equality between the sexes would be enough to counteract traditional gender patterns. But recent research indicates that the characteristics of girls and boys are shaped differently from the very first months of life. Gender roles, therefore, have deeper roots in children's personalities than had been realized. Compared with the influence of the surrounding society, the role of the school is limited. Furthermore, it appears that girls are subtly discriminated against in the everyday life in the classrooms, because teaching, curricula, and behavior patterns generally favor boys, their dominance, and male values generally.

In still other cases, a specific public policy results from compromises between conflicting aims, such as promoting equality and simultaneously limiting it. Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden recently adopted equality laws that illustrate this ambivalence. Because so much depends on law in Western societies, it may be well to examine these laws in detail.

First, the scope of the laws is clearly restricted. Only in Norway does the law apply to both the public and the private sectors, but the provisions were never intended to be enforced in the latter. And although the conditions of the workplace are a main concern, vital decisions in that area are excluded from the law and left to negotiations between employers and employees. Second, the laws presuppose harmony, and thus are gender-neutral, so that men can also benefit from the provisions. For example, in times of unemployment particularly, men might use the laws to penetrate traditional "women's" jobs—perhaps more effectively than women trying to enter traditional "men's" jobs. Third, the main purpose of the laws is to *prevent* differential treatment of individuals on the basis of gender. Thus, except for Sweden's, the laws are mostly passive; that is, they try to stop discrimination but demand no active measures to assure equality for women as a group. The Danish and Norwegian laws,

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however, permit special treatment if such treatment serves to further equality. Finally, those charged with enforcing the laws have, on the whole, little power and few resources: equality is to be obtained chiefly by voluntary action of the parties involved; in situations where conflicts between equality and other principles arise, it is clearly expected to yield.[29]

Since they were adopted only at the end of the last decade, it is still too early to evaluate the effects of the equality laws. They have, however, already influenced attitudes and inspired measures in different areas, and are deemed to be quite important. The laws have many potential ramifications, enough to have a number of people working full-time on equality problems, opening up to public scrutiny what is taking place, becoming expert in equality policy, raising issues, and taking initiatives to promote equality. And in individual cases, where discriminatory acts cannot always be reversed, women have gained valuable moral support. To what extent, however, will special treatment of women as a group be introduced? Public authorities are hesitant, although different forms of special treatment have been debated and in some cases implemented, particularly in Norway and Sweden.

Regardless of the laws' limitations, governments have been the main initiators of change in the division of labor based on gender, while the important organizations in the economic sector have for the most part dragged their feet. True, family and equality issues have been discussed, particularly by the big Swedish trade unions, and various equality agreements have been arranged for by employer and worker organizations as a result of conventions adopted by the International Labour Organization and government activity during the seventies. But concrete actions to transform formal declarations into reality in the workplace have been slow to develop. Nor, with the exception of Sweden, have the Nordic governments put on much direct pressure. Not only do governments lack clout, but they appear to see government intervention in such situations as outside the official "sphere of influence." Affirmative action programs, such as those in the United States, have as yet no place in government policy.

Despite the actions by female-dominated trade unions to strengthen the position of women in the labor market—some of which, in certain cases, were instrumental in achieving equality programs—workers' organizations generally have been ambivalent on equality

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issues. Many of the male union members do not understand the demands of women; some feel threatened by them; most have doubts that housework and family obligations are relevant to the problems of the workplace. At the same time, many women, because of certain factors, among them, their marginal status in the labor market, part-time employment, and home responsibilities, find they cannot participate actively in the trade unions. But if employers and wage-earners, females included, do not make deliberate efforts to foster equality in the workplace, how can it ever be achieved?

Comprehensive action, utilizing a broad range of means, is necessary if the Nordic countries are to achieve real equality. Governments and national employers' and workers' organizations have a part to play in adopting measures that provide a basis for local activity. But equality measures can only be implemented through efforts made by individuals and groups at the local level. They, and they alone, know the special circumstances of each enterprise and community, can reveal unacceptable practices, and can propose suitable constructive measures. Even with formal agreements, equality, to be real, demands a series of concrete activities and decisions. In addition, myriad informal sanctions can be used in a local environment to make people who do not conform to customary practices feel uncomfortable—and satisfied if they comply. Women entering "men's" jobs, for example, have been driven away by such methods, so it is imperative that there be people on the spot whose special task is to take the edge off such sanctions and promote equality. Here, the feminist movement and the trade unions have a crucial role to play.

In economies based on private enterprise, such as those of the West, public policy must necessarily play a secondary role in shaping society, compared to the economic and technological development taking place within. But governments can exert considerable influence in counteracting or stimulating different tendencies, influence that is important for the promotion of equality.

The economic expansion of the last decades was uniquely suited to the introduction of changes in the occupational life. The openings now are fewer, the labor reserves smaller. And if the worldwide economic stagnation continues, unemployment, not the *lack* of labor, will be the central issue. If public authorities reduce their budgets for education, health, and social services, a great number of women, it is

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feared, will be forced out of paid employment and into unpaid care-giving. But women will not simply return to the home: too many changes have already been made; they have seen too many glimpses of the far horizon. Besides, the wages earned by women in the work force have become a necessary part of family income. In addition, women want to continue to earn money and use their talents for more than housekeeping and child care. The lack of economic expansion and the "crisis" in care-giving will increase the attention given to the roles of women and men and help bring about new ways of organizing occupational and family life and the relationship between work and care-giving, paid and unpaid work.

ENDNOTES

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[1]We refer in the text to the majority populations in the five states: the Danes, the Finnish, the Icelanders, the Norwegians, and the Swedes. The Faroese, the Greenlanders, and the Sami peoples are not included, nor are the migrants and the gypsies.

[2]The following is a rough historical outline that can in no way impart the nuances or delineate the variations that exist in the different countries. The presentation is based mainly on Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish material, there being still less research done in tiny Iceland than in the other countries. Our sources are too many to be enumerated in detail, but we are particularly indebted to the work of Anna Caspari Agerholt, Märta von Alftan, Ida Blom, Harriet Clayhills, Drude Dahlerup, Inga Dahlsgård, Edmund Dahlström, Asta Ekenwall, Riita Jallinoja, Sylvi-Kyllikki Kilpi, Rita Liljeström, and Gunnar Qvist.

[3]There are no statistics concerning the gainful employment of women in Iceland before the Second World War.

[4]The proportion of women in the Finnish labor force has been relatively high mainly because the participation of men has been low. The percentage of the total female population in the labor force has been about the same in Finland and the other Nordic countries. Elina Haavio-Mannila, "The Position of Women," in Erik Allardt et al., *Nordic Democracy* (Copenhagen: Det Danske Selskab, 1981), pp. 555-88.

[5]Marja-Liisa Anttalainen, *De tudelade arbetsmarknaderna i de nordiska länderna åren 1950-1979 (The Segregated Labor Markets in the Nordic Countries 1950-1979)*, Nordic Council of Ministers (forthcoming). Even if the number of women participating in the labor force no longer varies greatly among the Nordic coun-

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tries, Finnish women have longer working hours. With regard to the representation of women in Parliament, Iceland is still somewhat behind the other countries.

[6]Edmund Dahlström, Harriet Holter, Sverre Brun-Gulbrandsen, et al., *The Changing Roles of Women and Men* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), and Harriet Holter, *Sex Roles and Social Structure* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1970).

[7]Dahlström et al., *The Changing Roles of Women and Men.*

[8]Annika Baude, "Public Policy and Changing Family Patterns in Sweden, 1930-1977," and Harriet Holter and Hildur Ve Henriksen, "Social Policy and the Family in Norway," *Sex Roles and Social Policy: A Complex Social Science Equation*, edited by Jean Lipman-Blumen and Jessie Bernard (London and Beverly Hills, California: Sage, 1979), pp. 145-75 and 199-224.

[9]Ida Blom, "A Centenary of Organized Feminism in Norway," in *Women's Studies International Forum* 5 (6): 569-74; Ida Blom, "Women in Organizations in Modern Norwegian History—Instruments of Power or of Protest," and Drude Dahlerup, "Why Separate Organizations for Women? Women's Organizations in Denmark: Their Relationship to Politics and to Feminism," in Fredrika-Bremer-Förbundet, Husmodersförbundet Hem och Samhälle, and Yrkeskvinnors Klubbars Riksförbund, *International Symposium on the Research on Women's Organizations* (Stockholm: 1978), pp. 84-98 and 143-69, and the chapter on women's organizations in Elina Haavio-Mannila, Drude Dahlerup, Maud Eduards, et al., *The Unfinished Democracy—Women in Nordic Politics* (forthcoming).

[10]Many of the organizations that were founded around the turn of the century—among others, the women's rights organizations—still exist and have been more or less active all the time.

[11]Irja Kandolin and Hannu Uusitalo, *Scandinavian Men and Women: A Welfare Comparison* (Helsinki: Research Group for Comparative Sociology, University of Helsinki, 1980), and the Nordic Council and Nordic Statistical Secretariat, *Levnadsnivå och Ojämlikhet i Norden (Living Conditions and Inequality in the Nordic Countries)* (Gothenburg: 1983, forthcoming in English).

[12]Nordiska Ministerrådet, *Könsroller och utbildning—en läges-rapport (Gender Roles and Education—A Report on the Situation* (Stockholm: NU B 1979:4), and Nordic Statistical Secretariat, *Yearbook of Nordic Statistics 1982* (Stockholm: Nordic Council and Nordic Statistical Secretariat, 1983). Around 1980, Iceland had the lowest percentage of girls in secondary school, 44 percent, and Sweden the highest, 57 percent.

[13]Anttalainen, *De tudelade arbetsmarknaderna*, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Trends in Employment and Unemployment of Women in OECD Countries* (Paris: OECD, 1982). Despite the recession of recent years, the numbers of employed women are still growing—as is also official female unemployment.

[14]International Labour Office, *Year Book of Labour Statistics 1982* (Geneva: ILO, 1982). Of the total male population, the percentage of men participating in the labor force in 1980-81 was 60 percent in Iceland, 59 in Denmark, 58 in Sweden, 57 in Norway, and 55 in Finland. In Canada and the United States, the percentage was 57.

[15]By the end of the 1970s, gainfully employed women on the average had working hours that amounted to 93 percent of the men's working hours in Finland, 78 percent in Sweden, 76 in Denmark, and 74 in Norway. There are no figures for Iceland. Nordic Council and Nordic Statistical Secretariat, *Levnadsnivå och*

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Ojämlikhet i Norden. For the amount of domestic work, see Iiris Niemi, *The 1979 Time Use Study Method* (Helsinki: Central Statistics Office of Finland, 1983).

[16]According to time studies around 1980, gainfully employed women in Finland and Norway spent about twice as much time on domestic work as did employed men. Niemi, *The 1979 Time Use Study Method*.

[17]There are several studies (by Anttalainen, Haavio-Mannila, and OECD) with somewhat varying data, analyses, and results, but the main patterns are fairly similar.

[18]Nordic Council and Nordic Statistical Secretariat, *Levnadsnivå och Ojämlikhet i Norden*.

[19]Data from the official statistical offices 1978-80. Nordic Council and the Council of Ministers, *ILO and Women in Employment and Occupation* (Stockholm: 1976).

[20]Denmark, Norway, and Sweden have self-determined abortion, while Finland and Iceland grant abortion on social or social-medical criteria. The number of abortions per one thousand live births varied between 429 in Denmark and 125 in Iceland in 1981. See Nordic Statistical Secretariat, *Yearbook of Nordic Statistics 1982*.

[21]Information from the Nordic Equality Councils in 1982. To be precise, the leave in Denmark and Norway is eighteen weeks. Sweden was the first country to introduce sharing of the leave with the father, in 1974. Besides the paid parental leave, there are other arrangements in connection with childbirth in some countries, for example, the right to leave without pay, allowances for nonemployed mothers, and home-care support.

[22]Nordic Statistical Secretariat, *Yearbook of Nordic Statistics 1982*, and Statistical Reports of the Nordic Countries, *Social trygghet i de nordiske länderna (Social Security in the Nordic Countries 1978)* (Stockholm: 1980).

[23]Official election statistics. Maud Eduards, "Sweden," and Elina Haavio-Mannila, "Finland," in *The Politics of the Second Electorate, Women and Public Participation*, edited by Joni Lovenduski and Jill Hills (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 208-27 and 228-51; Elina Haavio-Mannila, "Women in the Economic, Political and Cultural Elites in Finland," and Torild Skard, with the assistance of Helga Hernes, "Progress for Women: Increased Female Participation in Political Elites in Norway," in *Access to Power*, edited by Cynthia Fuchs Epstein and Rose Laub Coser (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), pp. 53-74 and 76-89; Ingunn Norderval Means, "Scandinavian Women," in *Women in the World*, edited by Lynne B. Iglitzen and Ruth Ross (Oxford: Clio Books, 1976), pp. 375-590, and Torild Skard, "The Participation of Women in Political Life in Norway and Other Nordic Countries," in *International Social Science Journal* (December 1983).

[24]See the chapter on Parliament in Haavio-Mannila et al., *The Unfinished Democracy*.

[25]Ibid., the chapters on Parliament and local politics.

[26]Ibid., the chapter on the corporate channel. Elina Haavio-Mannila, "Trade Unions and Their Influence on Policies Affecting Women," and Harriet Holter and Bjørg Aase Sørensen, "Women and the Union Movement in Norway," in Alice H. Cook, Val R. Lorwin, and Arlene Kaplan Daniels, *Women and Trade Unions* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, forthcoming).

[27]The chapter on the corporate channel in Haavio-Mannila et al., *The Unfinished Democracy*. Recently, a law was also passed in Norway providing as a general

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principle that all public committees, councils, and boards—state, county, and local—should have at least one female member each, and if there are four members on a committee, at least two should be women. In practice, though, there will be some exceptions to the general principle.

[28]Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat, *Measures for Equality between Women and Men in the Labour Market in the Nordic Countries* (Stockholm: NU A 1979:2E).

[29]See the chapter on public equality policy in Haavio-Mannila et al., *The Unfinished Democracy*.

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Erik Allardt

Representative Government in a Bureaucratic Age

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF what democratic government is and ought to be, it is always related to popular control of political power; it presumes a certain kind of relationship between the people and their leaders. Four issues can be singled out as being particularly salient in any discussion of democracy in the Nordic countries: (1) the amount and nature of political participation; (2) whether and to what extent the elected representatives and legislators actually represent the people; (3) the possibilities to voice dissent, and the pressures to conform; and (4) the nature and consequences of the growth of the public sector and the expansion of the bureaucracy. All four have been discussed widely in the Nordic world, and the recent debates about democracy have been animated and thorough.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE WELFARE STATE

All recent studies of individual well-being in the Nordic countries have made some mention of "political resources." This is true both for national, government-sponsored studies[1] that have aimed at establishing criteria for judging the nation's living standards, and for the more academic or scholarly analyses[2] concerned with the general level of well-being. An individual's political resources have been calculated generally in terms of his participation in different kinds of political activities. The idea behind such a calculus is to ascertain the

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extent to which an individual citizen can influence—or *feels* he can influence—the world around him.

Certainly, there is nothing unique in such attempts to measure political participation; political activity, after all, has long been thought to be a precondition for democracy. What is remarkable in the more recent analyses is that political resources are considered to be an integral part of the individual's well-being.

Although the term "welfare state" has many meanings, it is generally taken to be a society in which certain fundamental values have been realized; social security, relative equality of opportunity, the notion that everybody has the right to a modicum of well-being, that certain forms of inequality are not legitimate. In the Nordic world, the availability and use of certain political resources are presumed to be among the fundamental values of the welfare state. Political participation, one of the keystones of representative democracy in the Nordic welfare state system, assumes continued political activity by the citizen.

The idea that good government and the growth of individual well-being are related was already explicit in John Stuart Mill's path-breaking essay on representative government.[3] Mill took for granted that good government presupposed the participation of all citizens; he believed also that political participation furthered individual development, that it motivated the citizen to feel some responsibility for the whole society. Mill's classic formulations have been cited by many Nordic researchers, particularly those seeking to construct social indicators to measure citizen well-being.[4]

The tendency to emphasize political participation as an integral part of individual well-being is generally assumed to have historic roots. Even if the Nordic countries were not as free of feudalism as is sometimes imagined in standard, nonanalytic historical presentations, the tendency to emphasize the role of the common landowning peasantry in the development of the Nordic societies is wholly legitimate. Particularly in Sweden-Finland, alliances between the king and the peasantry against the nobles were not uncommon. More important, perhaps, is the fact that the nobility in the Nordic countries were never sufficiently strong or large to eliminate the peasantry as a political force. The Swedish Parliament, in which Finland also had representatives, was founded in the fourteenth century; parliamentary tradition was fully institutionalized during the sixteenth and sev-

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enteenth centuries.[5] The freeholding peasantry formed one of its four estates.

The peasants also shared the burden for the defense of the state. As early as the Middle Ages, there had been a fairly legitimate system of conscription. The British Marxist Perry Anderson, in a slightly ironic formulation of this, has written: "Precisely because of the existence of an independent peasantry the Swedish state could afford a conscript army—alone in Renaissance Europe."[6] This rather remarkable system of conscription, created at the end of the seventeenth century, had as its basic unit the farm, every one of which was required to provide the army with at least one soldier and a horse. This system, which prevailed in Sweden and in Finland until 1809, was a forerunner of later democratic draft systems built on the principle of "one man, one vote, one gun." In Sweden and Finland, the common peasantry was the basis of the whole system.

In the Nordic world during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the peasants showed very substantial local differences. The most striking existed between Denmark and southern Sweden on the one hand, and most of Norway and Sweden on the other. During these centuries, Denmark appeared to be on the brink of becoming somewhat like the more obviously feudal East European societies.[7] Yet in the eighteenth century, these differences began to diminish; landholding practices changed dramatically as a result of increased peasant proprietorship and the enclosure movements.[8]

Øjvind Østerud has summarized these basic changes in landholding and in the social order during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries under the heading of the *individualization of agriculture*.[9] This transfer of land to peasant ownership was based largely on state intervention; it happened before the modernization of agriculture and the introduction of new farming methods. Indeed, the land reforms were a prerequisite for technical innovation in farm management. These reforms, while creating social differentiation between the landholding and the landless population, also established positive ties between the rural population and the state, all this occurring before industrialization and the great migration to the cities. This transformation of landholding and tenure systems, while certainly one of the most important factors in explaining why the state in the Nordic countries has not traditionally been conceived as an oppressive monolith, as is the case in many continental countries, goes far to

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suggest also why the state has in many respects carried the image of being the benefactor of the common people.

Equally important, perhaps, is the fact that because of the strength of the common landholding peasantry, the Right has never developed into a strong political force in the Nordic world. The British scholar Francis Castles has explained the comparatively strong position of the social-democratic parties in the Nordic countries by pointing to the traditional weakness of the political right.[10] This weakness, an outcome of cultural and economic conflicts between urban elites and rural peasant producers, needs always to be kept in mind.

The development of the Nordic welfare state was obviously facilitated by a fairly widespread positive public attitude to state intervention. For centuries, large groups of the common population did not feel themselves to be outside the political system. The difference between public and private, so crucial in debates in the Anglo-Saxon countries, seem to have been of only minor importance in the Nordic countries. The lack of interest in the public-private dimension is reflected in the fact that public records of individual citizens, citing specific names, until recently was considered natural and legitimate. It is probably no coincidence that Sweden and Finland have the oldest population statistics in the world. At any rate, public participation has never been conceived of as something to offset the indulgence characteristic of a more private, individual world. Public and political participation for many centuries has been a sign of individual activity and well-being.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION—A GOING CONCERN

Voting is only one form of political activity out of many, and one that generally demands little effort on the part of the individual; nevertheless, the critical part it plays in democratic theory cannot be underestimated. The general parliamentary elections in the Nordic countries are considered important enough to bring out an overwhelming majority of the voters. In a comparative study of the national turnout rates of twenty-seven democratic countries between 1945 and the mid-1970s, the participation rates for the Nordic countries were consistently high.[11] The average turnout during that period in all countries was 78.6 percent; in Denmark it was 85.8, in Sweden 84.9, in Norway 80.8, and in Finland, which was the closest to the

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average, 79.0. In a ranking of national voter participation, Denmark was tenth, Sweden eleventh, Norway fifteenth, and Finland eighteenth. (Six of the most highly ranked countries, however, such as Australia, the Netherlands, and Venezuela, have compulsory voting.) Even with their relatively high rates, participation in the Nordic countries continued to increase, to 90 percent for Sweden, 88 for Denmark, 83 for Norway, and 82 for Finland in the period from 1965 to 1976.

Turnout rates, however, tell little about actual political involvement. The extensive indices of political activity in Nordic studies of well-being include levels of *organizational activity* (meetings in voluntary organizations), *representational activity* (participation in party meetings), *direct personal action* (contacting decision-makers and legislators), *direct political action* (participation in demonstrations), *media participation* (writing newspaper articles and letters to the editor), *efficacy* (the feeling that one can influence decisions), and so on. Table 1 shows the results of a study of Scandinavian well-being, based on interviews with individuals from fifteen to sixty-five years of age (including teenagers not yet entitled to vote).

The numbers indicate clearly, as do similar data, that voting participation may be high, but most citizens are *not* politically active—although they appear to be much more so than their counterparts in many other liberal democracies. To what extent, then, are activities cumulative? Put another way, do the *same* individuals tend always to be the active ones?

TABLE 1. Politically Active Individuals in the Nordic Countries (1972)

	Denmark	Finland	Norway	Sweden
Voted in the last election	81%	77%	77%	84%
Has asked for the floor in a public meeting	30	38	41	49
Has tried to influence a decision by contacting a politician or decision-maker	14	15	18	17
Feels able to influence decisions that affect one personally	70	53	73	79

Source: Erik Allardt, *Att ha, att älska, att vara. Om välfärd i Norden (Having, Loving, Being: On Well-being in the Nordic Countries)* (Lund, Sweden: Argos, 1975), pp. 113-17.

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This point—along with its corollary, the existence of an almost completely politically inactive citizenry—has been the subject of frequent debate, in particular, one that began in Norway in the 1970s and that eventually had international repercussions. It started with Willy Martinussen's book *The Distant Democracy* (a most telling title, indeed!), based on a large-scale survey of Norwegian political behavior, in which he described Norwegian political life as one marked by apathy and inequality. "For the masses," he wrote, "the democratic processes are remote. . . . All in all . . . the various forms of political participation go together and when we remember that it is only a small minority of voters who are politically active at all, it appears that people do not readily turn to politics as a means of altering the circumstances of their lives."[12]

Martinussen suggested that the Norwegian electorate could be divided into three different groups—the politically active, the politically passive, and the apolitical. The overwhelming majority are either passive or apolitical.

> On the assumption that to qualify as politically active, an individual should be involved in at least two forms of participation, the politically active, i.e., those taking part in political work and attempting to influence political decisions by various means, form a minority of less than 10 percent of Norwegian citizens. Approximately half of the voters are passive and consist of those who keep up with public affairs, discuss political questions in their own circles, and vote in all elections. The remainder of the voters, who neither vote regularly, keep up with politics, discuss political matters, nor attempt to influence political decisions in any way, may properly be described as apolitical.

But both Martinussen's conclusions and data have been questioned. William Lafferty, an American-born naturalized Norwegian, argues that Martinussen is entirely wrong in his interpretations of democratic processes in Norway. According to Lafferty, community dialogue and grass-roots processes are typical of Norwegian democracy, and these are activities that do not lend themselves easily to studies and surveys. Lafferty writes:

> The Norwegian form of integrated, consensual decision-making can be said to rest on a solid historical-cultural tradition of *communitarian equality*. This form of equality can be contrasted . . . with what we might call *market equality*. Whereas the latter stipulates the democratic conditions necessary

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for the competitive pursuit of particular interests (with presumed, but questionable, general-interest side-effects), the former prescribes the conditions necessary for the cooperative pursuit of common interests (with presumed, but questionable, particular-interest guarantees). The fact of Norway's strong egalitarian and consensual tradition has been widely acknowledged and well discussed.[13]

Lafferty draws on Harry Eckstein's *Division and Cohesion in Democracy: A Study of Norway,*[14] the longest and richest chapter of which is entitled—significantly—"Norway as a Community." On the basis of his own and Eckstein's interpretations, Lafferty suggests that, far from being a distant democracy, Norway is in fact a model for solving problems in liberal democracies.

Other researchers have joined the debate. Two clearly refute the idea that active political involvement is cumulative, and suggest that in Norway there is actually widely dispersed political participation.[15] Party organizations, another study found, represent only a part of the organizational culture of Finland, Norway, and Sweden. Many of the voluntary associations in these countries, which are assumed to be nonpolitical, evidently take care of the everyday interests of the citizenry.[16]

The particular points made in the Norwegian controversy and the conclusions drawn from it are of course important, but they become much less so in light of the lively and spirited debates they have engendered. Such debates have also flourished in the other Nordic countries, but those in Norway seem most to have caught the world's attention. There can be no doubt that there are many in the Nordic countries who are politically passive and that the 100 percent political participation that Mill believed to be the *sine qua non* of representative democracy remains an elusive goal. But the problems are no worse—and probably very much better—in the Nordic countries than in the other liberal democracies. The crucial point is that *political participation is a going concern.* There are, to be sure, the ubiquitous traditional threats, as well as some recent ones, to the functioning of parliamentary democracy. Yet, one of the most outstanding features of the Nordic countries is that open and public dialogues about the *conditions* of democracy frequently do take place. There may be tendencies elsewhere to curtail public dialogue, but in the Nordic countries, such dialogue is still very much alive. The very concern for threats to it[17]—especially those growing out of bureauc-

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racy and corporatism (as will be discussed later)—is in fact an important element in the Nordic debate.

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES

The Nordic countries have a tradition of grass-roots democracy, but their political systems are nevertheless based on representative government—and this remains the rule despite some recent interest in the use of referenda. The traditional view that most societal and political problems are too complicated to be decided by methods of direct democracy is at work here—just as it is in other liberal democracies.

In the Nordic countries, as elsewhere, the development of modern society has meant the rise of large-scale technology, the mushrooming of organizations, specialization, and a considerable increase in the number of laws and regulations. It has created, too, increased concern that ordinary people will no longer be able to influence decisions and their execution. A functioning representative democracy rests on two major conditions: first, there must be some degree of agreement—of opinions, beliefs, agenda—between the people and their representatives; second, there must be some degree of agreement—of policies and programs—between the latter and those who execute the decisions, that is, between the politicians and the bureaucrats. The increased differentiation of the public sector has served to accentuate both problems.

What, exactly, does popular representation entail? Although there is no clear consensus, at least three different forms can be distinguished: *symbolic representation, social representation,* and *opinion representation.*[18]

Symbolic Representation

This most traditional of the three forms plays only a minor role in the Nordic countries. Historically, kings and other monarchs were seen as symbolic representatives of their people—as, incidentally, are leaders in dictatorial and authoritarian regimes, who are often thought to symbolize the soul or the national identity of their people. In the monarchies of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, the king, the queen, and the royal family have an integrative function, but they have little or no political power, either in theory or in practice. Inter-

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estingly, symbolic representation is quite important in Finland, a republic with a popularly elected president, but this can undoubtedly be traced to its deep roots in Finnish society and folklore.[19] According to the Finnish Constitution, the president has political power, and his position is often regarded as being similar to that of the American and French presidents: he can recommend individuals to cabinet posts, dissolve the Parliament, under certain circumstances make decisions at cabinet meetings that run counter to that body's recommendations, and conduct foreign policy.[20] These rather wide-ranging powers are justified by the president's popular election and by what is considered to be Finland's geopolitical vulnerability. All of Finland's postwar presidents—Mannerheim, Paasikivi, Kekkonen, and Koivisto—have, despite party differences, symbolized the country's will to survive as a nation and their determination to defend its independence.

Social Representation

This form of representation has loomed much larger than the first, at least in public debates and political science research. As early as the 1930s, in fact, leading Swedish political scientists were studying the social composition of their Parliament.[21] There is, to be sure, no consensus about the real meaning of social representation for a democratic government. Parties that represent certain social classes or strata of society invariably want the elected bodies to mirror the socioeconomic composition of the electorate—but this seldom happens. Election is almost always biased in favor of groups of higher socioeconomic status, and they are clearly overrepresented at the expense of the lower strata. This fact has been borne out by studies in all the Nordic countries.[22]

Sören Holmberg, in a thorough study of the social composition of the Swedish Parliament, reaches the same conclusions that others have, but adds some interesting details.[23] During the last seventy years, a clear reversal in the pattern of those elected to Parliament has occurred. Until 1933 the number of upper-class representatives in the Swedish Parliament decreased steadily while the number of working-class representatives increased. In the middle of the thirties, this trend was broken and almost completely reversed: upper-class representation began to increase and that of the working class decreased. Other changes occurred too, among them, the drastic drop in the number

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of farmers elected to office and the increase in professional politicians—mainly officials of parties and interest groups—who began to sit in Parliament. The other Nordic countries no doubt have a similar story to tell, and the trend itself seems to signify the professionalization and bureaucratization of the polity.

Yet the decrease of one class and the increase of another is much less significant than the fact that upper-class and upper-middle-class representatives are recent arrivals; that is, their class *background* is different from their present class position. Members of Parliament, it appears, are upwardly mobile, and many are already entrenched in a political or organizational career by the time they are elected to office. Norwegian researchers studying power-holders in their government reached similar conclusions;[24] they pointed out furthermore that, significantly, the station in life one attains plays a much more important role in political decision-making than where one began.

At any rate, the social composition of the elected bodies differs substantially from the composition of the electorate—but this phenomenon is widespread throughout the liberal democracies, and it appears to be no more serious in the Nordic countries than anywhere else. On many counts, the contrary appears to be the case. All socially relevant groups in the Nordic countries have at least some representatives owing to proportional representation. Furthermore, underrepresentation is not always related to social class. Women, for example, tend to be universally underrepresented. Around the middle of the 1970s, the percentage of women in the Danish Parliament was 17; the Finnish, 23; the Icelandic, 5; the Norwegian, 24; and the Swedish, 23.[25] Compared to other countries—and with the exception of Iceland—women are rather well represented in the Nordic parliaments.

The problem of minority representation does not lend itself to such neat examination. Immigrant and minority workers in many European countries form quite large groups and are an important part of the labor force, but as a rule, they have only very limited rights; certainly, if they have not become citizens of the host country—and many have not—they are denied the right to vote. Sweden, the only Nordic country with a large immigrant population, has opened the door to political influence by allowing nonnaturalized immigrants to vote in municipal—although not in parliamentary—elections.

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Finland has gone the farthest in protecting the rights of a national minority, both in its constitutional declaration of 1919 making Finnish *and* Swedish the national languages, as well as in its legislation allowing the use of one's mother tongue in court cases and in all dealings with the authorities. Finland's Swedish-speaking population has lived on its southern and western coasts since the early Middle Ages and is spread over all social strata; in 1980 they accounted for 6.3 percent of the total population, or about 300,000 persons. On the local governmental level—the commune—the official public language is decided by the national government on the basis of the population size of the language group. In bilingual communes, state and local authorities are required to publish pronouncements and documents in the two languages, whereas the internal administrative language is that used by the majority. In unilingual communes, all transactions take place in that language.[26] Finland's language legislation is widely regarded as a model for the resolution of conflicts and for the protection of minorities.

How important is social representation? There appears to be no clear consensus; certain politicians and political scientists believe that unless all social groups feel themselves to be a part of the political system, the legitimacy of legislative and executive bodies is questionable; others say this is of importance mainly at the municipal level.[27] The growth of the public sector, some maintain, in countries that have many parties and proportional representation is resisted less than in countries where majority elections and two-party systems are the rule, simply because the former make for more even representation. Still others have argued that social or structural representation is unimportant; what matters, they say, is *opinion representation*. But whatever the emphasis, the degree of policy agreement between voters and legislators is a crucial question in a liberal democracy.

Opinion Representation

In Sweden, a study regarding this question showed that policy agreement between voters and legislators decreases across the political spectrum: specifically—and more so on the left than on the right—legislators tend to be more liberal than their constituents.[28] The closest agreement in policy matters, it appears, is that between the Conservative party and its constituents.

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Similar studies in the other Nordic countries have not been conducted, but it seems likely that the situation there is no different. Voters generally tend to be more conservative than their representatives. Another Swedish study shows that members of municipal councils are more willing than the voters to increase public expenditures. The stronger the political involvement, it seems, the greater the willingness to use public funds.[29]

It is important not to overestimate these fairly moderate differences of opinion. The difference in views in the history of democratic theory and the present-day Nordic debate make their real meaning difficult to assess. A more critical question concerns the treatment accorded to dissenting and deviant minority opinions in the Nordic countries today.

DISSENT AND CONFORMITY IN THE WELFARE STATE

It is impossible to give a simple answer to this question. On the formal, judicial level, the Nordic countries are probably among the most liberal and free in the whole world; dissident political opinions can be freely expressed without running the risks of reaction from the police or punishment by the judiciary. The real problem is the demand for conformism that is typical of all small societies with very homogeneous social and religious structures. The sanctions imposed on those who deviate come mainly in the form of ostracism—but even this statement needs qualification. Dissenters are not hindered in expressing and practicing their beliefs, but they are often disregarded by the political organizations and the media. Stig Strömholm, professor of legal theory and one of the most sophisticated critics of present-day Swedish society, believes that even the unfettered existence of a small "lunatic fringe" on both the right and the left does not change the picture; that though there are no hindrances to the expression of individual, even eccentric opinions, nevertheless all official mechanisms—such as those used in selecting school curricula, university reforms, television programs—create a very conformist market of ideas.[30]

The tendency toward conformism is present in all the Nordic countries, but it seems to be most visible in Sweden. Ironically, one reason for this is the very openness of the society: people are easily moved and mobilized by the same, often minor events. The public

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tends to become a mass easily shifting its focus of attention. Letters to the editor and human interest stories are uniformly humanitarian: they stress the importance of being on the side of the underdog, of putting the blame on society, of seeking remedies in the development of welfare provisions, of developing stiff safety regulations, and of regarding "reasonable" behavior as something fundamentally important. There is an avoidance of opinions that emphasize individual responsibility, the thrill of risk-taking, fundamental religious questions, and the tendency of welfare arrangements to favor the middle class rather than the underdogs. Of course there is much more to be said about the Swedish press. All Swedish—in fact, all Nordic—newspapers of some size have "cultural pages" containing articles of fairly high literary or scientific quality, and often articles and discussions about democratic principles. Yet, despite conformism and the avoidance of dissident opinions, the press is remarkably free to publish what it wishes. And since nothing in the public realm is too sacred for airing in the press, secret dealings and manipulations are rare indeed.

Because Denmark and Finland were less isolated geographically than Sweden and Norway, social conformism there is less marked. Denmark combines elements from both the Nordic and continental countries, whereas Finland combines Nordic and East European, mainly Baltic, influences, and also hosts both religious (Orthodox) and linguistic (Swedish-speaking) minorities. There is, of course, another side to the coin. Because of Finland's more violent history and geopolitical vulnerability, the society has traditionally been less lenient than the others toward some forms of both political dissent and social deviance. This tougher climate has, however, been expressed not so much in conformity as in stronger social conflicts. On the whole, however, Finland is treading the same path of development as the others; that is, conflicts are resolved increasingly by agreements and by accepting certain rules of the game. A point of interest: from the 1970s onward, the Finnish government has included both communist and bourgeois politicians. In Iceland, too, the Communists have been included in coalition governments on several occasions.[31]

Conventional political opinions in the Nordic countries are clearly related to traits and elements of the welfare state. I have already pointed to some of the historical reasons for its fairly smooth adoption. Generally, the Nordic people conceive of the state as a benefac-

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tor, not as an oppressor. For this reason, and despite convergent trends in liberal democracies, the notion of a "Nordic" or "Scandinavian" model of the welfare state seems plausible indeed.

THE NORDIC MODEL, SOCIAL DEMOCRACY, AND SIGNS OF CHANGE

Welfare theorists make a distinction between a *residual* and an *institutional* model of social welfare. In the former, there is a strong commitment to providing selective forms of welfare, to a belief that most people are capable of making their own arrangements for welfare, and to the conviction that the state should step in only in cases where people are unable to do so. According to this model, allocations should be made on the basis of means tests. In the institutional model, on the other hand, there is a strong commitment to providing welfare across the board, to a conviction that the welfare of the individual is the responsibility of the collectivity, and to a belief that social welfare should be accomplished by political means rather than by the market mechanism. This model considers means tests to be negative acts of discrimination toward welfare recipients, and for that reason, rejects them. In its aim to be comprehensive, it advocates the redistribution of income and considers such transfers to be a crucial means of obtaining welfare in a population.[32]

The two welfare models cannot be found in their pure form anywhere, but the Nordic countries come close to realizing the institutional model. The Nordic welfare system aims at being comprehensive on several counts: its provisions are intended to cover the entire population; its programs are institutionalized in such a way as to make it a basic right of every citizen to receive a modicum of welfare and social security; the welfare arrangements are assumed to cover a very wide range of life situations and extend to areas such as housing, education, leisure time activities, political participation, and so on.

Thus, it seems reasonable to speak of a "Nordic" model despite the differences in their welfare systems. A recent analysis of some major policy areas in the four countries indicates that Sweden comes closest to the institutional model, whereas the others contain more residualist elements.[33] In Denmark, for example, there is no public pension system, and the private pension schemes apply mainly to

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white-collar and better paid employees. In Finland, housing and housing production are largely based on the demands of the market, and public housing programs have only limited resources.

The main initiators of the Nordic welfare state were, of course, the social-democratic parties. Gösta Esping-Andersen's summary of the political goals of the Social Democrats in Denmark and Sweden is an apt one.

> Since the 1930s, the major goal of the Social Democrats has been the establishment of a modern, comprehensive welfare state in which the state takes over responsibility for the adequacy of any individual's or household's standard of living and social and economic security. In both countries, the model has been similar. First, the construction of an effective "security net" which prohibits anyone from falling into abject poverty. Second, a system of immediate aid to people who for some reason find themselves in sudden need. Third, a system of income transfer to obtain more equality in the rewards structure. And, finally, a system of promoting an equalization of chances in the opportunity structure.[34]

Esping-Andersen goes on to say that, in both Denmark and Sweden, the social-democratic parties feel that, by and large, they have succeeded in attaining most of their original welfare goals. In fact, in their 1960 party program, the Swedish Social Democrats practically declared that the main goals had been attained. In the process, the welfare goals have also ceased to be that party's near-monopoly: all major parties in the Nordic countries today support the social-democratic prewar conception of the welfare state. Thus, a Norwegian study contends that "all parties seem committed to the present format of the welfare state in Norway."[35]

If all the major parties are declared defenders of the welfare state, who might the dissenters be? It needs pointing out that the Social Democrats in Finland and Iceland, the most easterly and westerly of the countries, are in a somewhat different position from their counterparts in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. The Social Democrats make up Finland's largest party, but even in the very successful election of 1983, it captured only fifty-five of the two hundred seats in Parliament. In Iceland, the bourgeois Independence party is the largest, and the Social Democrats are actually scattered into different party blocs. In both countries, coalition governments rule. Both in Finland and Iceland, the cleavage has been more multidimensional than in the more centrally located Nordic countries.

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In Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, the Social Democrats have managed to maintain a kind of political hegemony even when they have been, technically speaking, out of power. Of course there has been some opposition to the welfare state—from the Right *and* the Left—but for the most part it has been rather weak. The radical Left gained some strength during the student movement of the late sixties, but it waned toward the end of the seventies, and has been quiescent thus far in the eighties. In Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, on the other hand, many of the intellectuals of the student movement have recently clearly supported the maintenance and expansion of the welfare state under social-democratic rule, with even rather left-wing Social Democrats in Sweden arguing that their party had the best chance of maintaining labor peace. Moreover, with the success of the welfare state and social democracy, the traditional rightist goals of national integration and societal peace have become fundamental or overriding social-democratic values.

There has been some opposition from the Right to the institutional and comprehensive welfare model, but outspoken opponents have not been numerous. Most people in the Nordic countries still strongly support welfare and social security programs, and consider social programs to be high-priority items. According to Norwegian election studies, those who want to see reductions in the expenditures for social security have usually amounted to less than 10 percent of the electorate.[36] To be sure, there has been a "welfare backlash," but it has been rather weak, and only temporarily did it gain any momentum at all. In 1980 in Finland, a clear majority believed that social security programs were being introduced at "just the right pace," with 21 percent on either side saying the pace was too fast or too slow.[37]

Yet, there are unmistakable signs of change and reversal. New attitudes and issues that do not fit neatly into the old left-right division have surfaced: antibureaucratic movements, active environmentalism, antinuclear activity, feminist movements, large-scale demonstrations for peace, and so on. Even more general changes in needs and value orientations have been observed. The leading Swedish pollster and social theorist Hans Zetterberg has described the changes in terms of Weber's well-known distinction between a *zweckrational* and a *wertrational* orientation.[38]

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The emphasis in both politics and public policy in the welfare state has typically been on practical results—on, that is, the *zweckrational*. It is believed that people, through the political process, pursue their self-interests and their rights. Welfare policies in welfare states such as the Nordic ones have been based on the assumption that if people are provided with sufficient resources, they will use them for the rational pursuit of their own happiness and well-being. During most other epochs, politics was more clearly oriented toward the promotion of absolute causes. When such a *wertrational* ethos prevails, things are done because they are right in principle, and political causes are promoted on grounds other than the people's material interests.

On the basis of extensive survey data, Zetterberg points to various signs that show the increasing importance of a *wertrational* orientation. People have begun to emphasize their subjective experiences and the importance of following "inner voices" instead of being led by outside demands and manipulations.[39] The movement is toward a committed rationality, an "ethics of principle," and away from the "ethics of consequence," to use another of Weber's famous dichotomies. This new mood, emphasizing the fate of the individual, is combined with a distrust of political apparatus and the state bureaucracy. On the basis of comparative data, Zetterberg shows that revived concerns for personal growth, committed rationality, and inner experiences are not only stronger among young people than among adults, but that they also tend to be stronger in Sweden than in many other Western nations. There are signs of this in the other Nordic countries too. The new interest in the deeper meaning of life, in inner-directness, and in moral principles forms a consistent pattern sometimes described as the "new subjectivism."[40]

SUCCESS THAT BREEDS DISSATISFACTION

With all this, there is no denying the fact that the welfare state is a success. It has been shown that in democratic states where the systems of welfare are more planned and centralized, public policies are pursued more successfully than in countries with less planned welfare schemes.[41] David Cameron, a political scientist from Yale, demonstrated recently that there is a strong positive correlation between the size of the increase in the public economy and economic equality

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measured by the difference in the proportion of all national income received, after taxes, by the top and bottom 20 percent of households. It is significant that Sweden and Norway rank at the top with regard both to public expenditures and to the slight difference in incomes of the top and bottom strata.[42] During the 1970s recession, Sweden had a remarkably good employment record, thanks to its strong labor policy. Partly owing to an increase in the volume of part-time employment, it was able to avoid unemployment almost completely and to increase overall employment.

If the Nordic welfare states are such a success, why, then, is there disappointment? In a recent book, Albert Hirschman suggests that success *always* breeds disappointment in activities that are aimed at yielding subjective feelings of satisfaction.

> Acts of consumption, as well as acts of participation in public affairs, which are undertaken because they are expected to yield satisfaction, also yield disappointment and dissatisfaction. They do so for different reasons, and to different degrees, but to the extent that the disappointment is not wholly eliminated by an instantaneous downward adjustment of expectations, any pattern of consumption or of time use carries within itself, to use a hallowed metaphor, "seeds of its own destruction."[43]

The German sociologist and specialist on indicators of welfare, Wolfgang Zapf, has also emphasized that the problem of the welfare state is to be found in its very success.[44] The idea of the welfare state seems to have lost much of its motivating power.

Although the work of the welfare state has not yet been completed, the idea that nourished it seems to have lost momentum. The state now handles routinely demands that once brought forth mass organizations to struggle for their achievement. In fact, whenever mass organizations have been successful in achieving their goals, these have been incorporated into the state apparatus. The parallel with John Wesley's famous dictum is obvious: A Methodist, because of his industry and frugality, cannot avoid becoming rich—but with increasing riches, he runs the risk of superficiality, worldliness, and sensuous passions. If the idea of the welfare state and the organizations behind its ascendancy have lost some of their motivating power, this loss is likely to be felt among young people in particular. The increase in committed rationality among Swedish youth that Zetterberg found bears this point out. The new attitudes, however, are not

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only reactions to the present predicament, but may also prove to be the remedy for it.

STATE INTERVENTION AND CORPORATISM

Despite the foregoing, there is no denying that bureaucratization, state intervention, and the growth of the public sector have continued unabated in the Nordic countries. If we take as a measure of state intervention the amount of the government's revenues as a percent of GNP, Sweden and Norway rank at the top of the list of liberal democracies.

There are, however, other indicators of the growth of the public sector than economic ones. The degree of corporatism, for example, expresses both how opposing interests in the society are mediated and conflicts solved. In its modern usage, corporatism generally describes a society that is ruled by consensus, somewhat as if a social contract between the leaders of the trade unions, the confederations of employers, the state bureaucrats, and the party functionaries had been concluded. This analysis has important implications for representative democracy, because a corporatist structure inevitably means the curtailment of parliamentary power.[45] This comes as a result of the increase in the power of groups engaged in industrial production, at the expense of unproductive groups, and the greater ease with which employers and owners of capital can influence political decisions compared to the situation in a more pluralist, parliamentary structure.[46]

A threefold typology assigning advanced industrial countries to *highly corporatist, medium corporatist,* and *weakly corporatist* categories has been devised by the German political scientist Manfred Schmidt.[47] In strongly corporatist countries, cooperation between the state, employers' organizations, and labor unions is well developed; it is based on an ideology of mutual interests and assumes almost the form of a social contract. A typical case would be an agreement on wages and prices between labor unions and employers concluded under state supervision. In some countries, mainly Japan, this kind of cooperation takes place also at the company level. In countries of weak corporatism, conflicts between employers' organizations and the labor unions often erupt, and there is little or no bargaining between the state and the labor organizations. In coun-

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tries of medium corporatism, the cooperation between employers and labor unions is important, but the state is only a weak third party.

A fourfold typology, devised by Finnish political scientist Heikki Paloheimo, cross-tabulates the degree of state intervention and the degree of corporatism (Fig. 1).[48] Both variables were divided into high and low categories. The degree of state intervention was defined by the amount of the government's revenues as a percent of GNP, whereas the degree of corporatism was obtained from Schmidt's classification, such that low and medium corporatism were grouped together. The letters H (high), M (medium), and L (low) indicate the degree of corporatism according to Schmidt's index.

The definitions and delineations used can certainly be criticized, but that the Nordic countries are exceptionally high on both corporatism and state intervention seems irrefutable. The remarkable growth of the public sector in all the Nordic countries is clearly related to maintaining the welfare system. The growth is concentrated in the areas of collective consumption and income redistribution, such as health care, recreational facilities, education, and so on. The Swedish Social Democrats, it has been said, have socialized both consumption and, through taxation, incomes. They have not yet, however, socialized the means of production.[49]

The scope of state intervention, measured both in terms of public expenditures and government revenues, is large in all the Nordic countries. Nevertheless, corporatism is stronger in Sweden and Norway than in Denmark, Finland, and—at least from what is currently known about that country—Iceland.[50] There are also clear differences in the quality of state intervention. Esping-Andersen emphasizes that public spending is less productive in Denmark than in Sweden, primarily because welfare expenditures in Denmark are largely in the form of services, such as pensions, that have little or no effect on economic growth, whereas in Sweden, public spending is directed toward the reproduction (retraining of workers and the production of new workers to replace older ones) and regeneration of the labor force.[51]

State intervention and corporatism have been strongest in Sweden of all the Nordic countries. Perhaps a brief description of Swedish labor policy can best illustrate how successfully this combination has worked. In the 1950s the Swedish Federation of Labor, the LO, set

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State interventionism

Corporatism	High	Low
High	1. Corporatist and state interventionist governing Austria (H) Norway (H) Sweden (H)	3. Corporatist governing Japan (H) Switzerland (H)
Medium or Low	2. State interventionist governing Belgium (M) Bundesrepublik Deutschland (M) Denmark (M) Finland (M) France (L) Holland (H) Luxembourg (H)	4. Pluralist governing Australia (M) Canada (L) Ireland (L) Italy (L) United Kingdom (L) USA (L)

Figure 1. Degrees of State Intervention and Corporatism

out to institute a policy that aimed at combining full employment, stable prices, economic growth, and a more equitable distribution of workers' wages. The model, often called the "Rehn model" after one of its architects, Gösta Rehn, was thoroughly conceived and planned. Wage bargaining was aimed at the same increase for all regions and industries; inevitably, of course, the weakest firms, those that could ill afford to pay the increase, would fail. The resulting unemployment was to be met by a system of worker retraining for transfer to other types of employment. For a long time the model worked extremely well. As inefficient companies folded, workers—who at that time were scarce—were transferred to more productive ones and to communities better suited to industrial production. The program brought about a rapid increase in the average Swedish worker's standard of living and gave Sweden an edge in international markets.

From the very beginning, the Rehn model implied both active state intervention in moving workers and a vast state machinery for re-

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training them. LO economists conceived the model, but it was the Social Democrats who adopted it and who, in 1956, introduced it in legislation labeled "Active Manpower Policy." A centralized, authoritative labor agency was established to direct the supply of labor, the creation of jobs, and the retraining of workers. The agency itself was highly corporatist: it was under strict state and government authority and its governing board was composed of representatives from all the central labor organizations. In practice, the model increased the ability of the state to control the economy and the flow of capital, but at the same time, by effectually facilitating the failure of the weaker firms, it greatly stimulated the tendencies of Swedish private industry to centralize and concentrate. In the process, Swedish industrialists and business leaders lost some of their power, but at the same time were given free rein to develop their industries more efficiently.[52]

During the last decade, the Rehn model has worked less smoothly than before. Neither high labor mobility nor the possibility to retrain large categories of workers is infinite. At present, in fact, there are structural, economic, and motivational hindrances to the former.

The economic problems that beset the industrialized world starting in the last decade have affected Sweden too. Unemployment remained fairly low, but economic growth was weak and inflation high. Past successes perhaps contributed to the difficulties. The rapid rise in the standard of living created a very potent domestic demand and an appetite for foreign goods. In times of sagging exports, it has meant a highly unfavorable balance of trade. Unemployment, however, has not reached the levels of other industrialized countries. Despite the economic difficulties, the corporatist system has been able to retain its image of efficiency and legitimacy, although many outside of Sweden may marvel at the strength and acceptability of certain corporatist sentiments in Swedish society. Swedes are not only proud of their corporatist structures, but continue to seek new solutions in corporatist mechanisms. Yet with all the public approbation, corporatist tendencies are no longer sacrosanct; they are being discussed increasingly, and party lines are being drawn.

The great issue in Swedish politics in the past few years has been the "wage earners' fund," the institution of worker participation in the economy through collective ownership of capital and a wage earners' share in the growth of the corporations' private capital. The

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issue is a controversial one, even among Social Democrats.[53] Its proponents emphasize the democratizing effects of the funds while others maintain that their institution would concentrate enormous power in the hands of a few trade union leaders.

While both state intervention and corporatism exist in various degrees in the other Nordic countries as well, only in Sweden have they been so consistently applied and generally accepted. Until the beginning of this decade, the opposition to them was weak: both could easily be increased in the name of equality and labor peace. But the opposition has now stiffened, and the augmentation of state power is eliciting growing concerns. The leading Swedish newspapers, *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet*, carried several major articles last spring and summer about the dangers inherent in the increase of power both of the state and the bureaucracy. Yet, although the influential Social-Democratic vice-prime minister, Ingvar Carlsson, admitted in an article in *Dagens Nyheter* that governmental steering had perhaps gone too far,[54] its title and main theme, "A Strong State Guards Liberty," reflects not only a Social-Democratic belief but an old and general Scandinavian one as well, a belief that is one of the very foundations on which both the strength of the Social Democrats and the Nordic welfare state have been built.

THE PUBLIC DIALOGUE AS A CRUCIAL DEMOCRATIC MECHANISM

The debate in the Swedish press is symptomatic in more ways than one of the situation both in Sweden and in the other Nordic countries. There are, as elsewhere, many dangers and threats to the democratic system, but there are also strong counterbalancing factors. One—and a very crucial one at that—is the ongoing debate about the prerequisites and conditions for democracy. In Sweden particularly, both the dangers and the counterbalancing forces are quite visible.

In a sense, Swedish society presents us with a riddle: How can a country be so strong an exponent of state intervention and corporatism and at the same time be considered—by its citizens and outsiders alike—a very democratic society? The answer is twofold: both the ongoing debate about the conditions of democracy and the function of the press in bringing conditions in the country under public scruti-

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ny act as the counterbalancing forces. In addition, there is open and animated discussion of the different avenues for promoting democracy at the grass roots, and of making it possible for people themselves to make decisions on matters that affect them directly. Most of these discussions relate to the working life and fall under the rubrics "industrial democracy" or "economic democracy." There has been an unmistakable tendency to include workers on the decision-making bodies of industries and companies. Parity between the owners/managers, on the one hand, and workers, on the other, means an equal sharing of decision-making power. Yet in bodies where such parity has been realized, very little, if any, decision-making takes place. Workers in Sweden, Denmark, and, with some qualifications, Norway have representatives on boards of directors, but they are in minority positions. It is an open and distinctly partisan question to what extent stepwise reforms—the movement toward the parity line—will continue until the parity line, or a point beyond, is reached.[55] But what is crucial is precisely that there is a lively debate taking place at all.

The controversy over the wage earners' fund sums up the debate admirably: the funds are a way to extend democracy, but they also imply a strongly corporatist mechanism. A great debate about the conditions of democracy in Sweden, both present and future, has begun, but at bottom it is primarily an economic issue, since the welfare state, through its provisions, has already funneled large amounts of capital into the hands of the workers and the labor unions.

Whatever the outcome, the loser is bound to go down with flying colors. A critical institutional mechanism—perhaps the most critical—for the defense of democracy in the Nordic countries, particularly Sweden, is the open and aggressive public debates. Not only are the power elite in the corporatist structures subject to a surprising amount of questioning and criticism, but the very openness of the debates makes secret agreements and decisions difficult. And it is this openness, too, that has helped the parliaments, Sweden's in particular, retain their power, notwithstanding the strongly corporatist auspices under which many important policy measures are planned.

Gustaf Petrén, one of the foremost specialists on Swedish and Nordic constitutional matters, writes:

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Of great importance is the application of the principle of openness. All documents and all proceedings and decisions are subject to scrutiny in the bright light of publicity. In all the Nordic countries it has been the practice ever since the olden days for court proceedings to take place in public, and this principle even applies to the administrative courts in Finland and Sweden. In the West Nordic countries (Denmark, Iceland and Norway) the opposite rule was long in effect, at least as far as the ordinary administration was concerned. Ever since 1766 Sweden has had a regulation about all public documents being open and available. In principle every document kept in a governmental office—be it national or local—is to be accessible to the public. This rule must naturally enough be restricted in many ways. Finland applies the same basic principle, although it is less developed than the one in Sweden. The principle of public scrutiny of official documents has gained ground in both Norway and Denmark, the Swedish experience having served as an example to be followed. . . .

In reality, and for the most part, it is the press that takes full advantage of this principle of publicity. In Sweden, the news bureau, which is owned by the newspapers, systematically goes through all the important documents and provides the newspapers with articles having a bearing on such documents. Thus, the principle of publicity does not only pertain to the one who is involved in the question being considered, but such insight is an advantage that devolves on everyone to the same degree.[56]

It is worth noting that Petrén attributes almost constitutional functions to the press.

In Sweden, the "publicity principle" has been internalized by decision-makers and others. One important point to bear in mind is that both openness and the publicity principle are not merely democratic virtues but are in fact almost *necessary* conditions for the maintenance of democracy in highly corporatist and state interventionist Sweden.

Democratic governments are always the products of history, despite the doctrines that give rise to and sustain them. Each one has different strengths and weaknesses, different threats and counterbalances. Despite clear differences between the Nordic countries, their patterns of development contain strong common elements. In present-day Nordic societies, the ideas of representative democracy and the welfare state are tightly intertwined. That the state has been seen as a benefactor rather than as an oppressor has facilitated the growth of a comprehensive welfare system, but has led also to strong forms

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of state intervention and corporatism. These, however, are counterbalanced by the almost continuous public debate about democracy and steadfast adherence to the publicity principle.

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Gylfi Gíslason

In Defense of Small Nations

THE NORDIC PEOPLES HAVE THEIR OWN individual and in many ways exceptional history. From the earliest recorded times, people of Nordic (i.e., Germanic) stock have dwelt in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Iceland and the Faeroes were settled by inhabitants of these lands during the latter part of the ninth century, as well as by those of Scotland and Ireland. Long before this—shortly after the birth of Christ—the Finns, a people of quite different stock, speaking a completely unrelated language, moved from the Baltic lands to the area we now call Finland, and through their relations with the Swedes, became, culturally speaking, a Nordic people. Apart from the Finns, the Nordic peoples shared many traits: a common or very similar language, the same religion and view of life, customs that developed along similar lines, closely related social and political views, and similar laws. Their cultures, in fact, merged—they formed a single identity.

Their political relations, however, have not always been serene; at times, more than one has had to bow to domination by another, and in centuries past, they have taken up arms against one another. Although military conflict between the Nordic countries is unthinkable today, they nevertheless pursue quite different defense and economic policies. Alliances in these areas play an important role in their part of the world, and as a result, Denmark, Iceland, and Norway became members of NATO at its inception. Finland and Sweden, on the other hand, have opted for neutrality, although with rather dissimilar emphases. Denmark is a member of the European Economic Community—the Common Market; the four others belong to the Euro-

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pean Free Trade Association (EFTA), but are linked in various ways with the Common Market. Their foreign trade policies are disparate, and in some areas they compete vigorously in the international market.

The five nations have, however, found many areas in which they can cooperate successfully. The Nordic Council, founded in 1955, has no legislative authority, but acts rather as an advisor to the governments and legislative assemblies of the member nations. An example of their functions is the arrangement of special agreements on cooperation in particular areas. One such is the agreement on culture, according to which an annual budget for activities is drawn up and grants made, for example, for translating works from one Scandinavian language into another. Translations of works in Finnish, Icelandic, Faeroese, Greenlandic, and Samish (Lappish) into one of the more accessible Scandinavian languages are given special emphasis. In addition, each year the Nordic Council gives an annual award for literature to a Scandinavian writer, and every other year, an award for music is made to a Scandinavian composer.

In the social field, the nations work closely together, particularly in the areas of social security and health. All the Nordic countries form a single employment area, and all the citizens of Scandinavia can pass freely between them without the use of a passport. In the economic field, the nations engage in extensive cooperation in communications, power (especially power grids), and finance. Still, they have been unable to form comprehensive alliances; despite the attempts made in the years following World War II, they failed to establish a defense alliance, and the quest for a Scandinavian economic alliance has thus far proved to be an elusive one.

In numerous fields outside the range of governments and public institutions, however, close cooperation between associations and institutions has been achieved. These include trade unions, sports associations, youth associations, and the so-called Nordic Societies, freely organized groups working for friendship and understanding between sister cities throughout Scandinavia. This unofficial cooperation, together with that arranged on the governmental level, has helped the peoples of Scandinavia achieve a close sense of Nordic identity, closer than one would expect, considering that they are five separate nations of 22 million people, scattered over a huge area, spanning 1,600 miles from east to west. No wonder, then, that one repeatedly

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hears the question: *What sort of phenomenon is Scandinavia?* The Scandinavians consider themselves to be a single cultural entity, and their social structures are very similar. Yet, when it comes to trade and foreign affairs, they lean in different directions, and in spite of extremely close cooperation in innumerable fields, proposals to establish a formal alliance have withered through lack of support. Is this attitude perhaps a mistaken one?

II

The Nordic countries are modern industrialized states, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway having industrialized earlier than Finland, and Iceland, not until this century. As developed nations, their standards of living are of course high, and in addition, their societies are structured as welfare states (in some respects, they can be considered the pioneers of this system). But compared to other industrialized countries, the Nordic states are small and the Nordic peoples comprise quite small nations. Even if they were amalgamated into a single state, comprised of 22 million Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Finns, and Icelanders, and Faeroese, Greenlanders, and Samish as well, it would still be a small one. The Nordic people, however, know how to use their natural resources and highly trained work force to the fullest, and their standards of living are therefore among the best in the world.

Smallness, of course, has its drawbacks. Large-scale nuclear projects and space exploration are beyond the capabilities of small nations, so countries like those of Scandinavia cannot take the initiative in these areas. In microcomputer technology and telecommunications, however, small companies and small nations, as well as huge corporations and great nations, can achieve significant results—although cooperation between the two seems a necessary condition for success. Yet their individual successes would undoubtedly be of far greater magnitude if the five separate states were one—which leads us to an important question: To what extent, if any, should technological and economic considerations be allowed to influence the policies of small nations vis-à-vis their relations with larger nations and between themselves?

It is axiomatic that every nation seeks to preserve its cultural heritage—its language and national characteristics, its arts and literature, its own deep-rooted traditions. Each nation has its history and its

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particular range of experiences, and every individual in that nation, be it great or small, is aware that his cultural heritage is the gift of his forebears. This is particularly true of the Nordic nations, each one of which has a strong sense of patriotism and its own literary and artistic cultural heritage, each one of which has preserved ancient customs even as it entered the modern age. If the five become a single nation to secure greater economic advantage, these values will most certainly be replaced by a new Nordic nationality and a new Nordic culture—and the older ones will be lost forever.

Fortunately, the small nations do not have to choose this course, since smallness is important and advantageous in its own right. At least among democratic nations, cooperation in economic matters between small and great nations does no damage at all to the independence of the former or to their individual characteristics, especially language and nationality. In matters of defense, technology, and trade, the next decades will undoubtedly see an increased division of labor between great nations and small; the tasks that only the great powers can undertake will most certainly grow—and just as certainly, they will have to rely on the small nations for assistance. The mission of the small nations, therefore, far from being one of joining together to become one great nation, will be to preserve the diversity of world culture. The great nations, in their turn, must support and respect the small nations in their efforts to preserve their heritage. The industrialized world needs both—the former, because past and future progress has been, and will continue to be, dependent mainly upon them; the latter, because without their rich diversity, the world of industrialized states would be a much poorer one.

III

Yet, despite the very important role that the small nations have to play, there is no denying the fact that living in a small country is impractical in many ways. Wouldn't it be better if all Scandinavians spoke one language—say, Swedish—instead of having to learn one another's—or English—which we have to learn in any case? Living in Iceland, a nation of 240,000 souls, makes one acutely aware of the drawbacks of a small country. A story told of the Icelandic author Halldor Laxness, the Nobel prizewinner in literature for 1955, illustrates the difficulties very well. The year of the award, his publishers in Stockholm held a reception in his honor to which a number of

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foreign and Swedish journalists were invited. Laxness, in those days, was rather radical in his views, but he was nevertheless no ascetic—he owned, among other things, a very expensive American car. At one point a Swedish journalist asked him if driving his luxury automobile on the grit roads of Iceland wasn't a very expensive proposition. A tense moment of silence followed; many felt that this was an awkward question to ask of a Nobel prizewinner. Laxness thought for a while and then said, "Being an Icelander is, on the whole, a very expensive business."

Being an Icelander *is* expensive, because it costs a great deal to maintain a modern state. The question of whether people are willing to accept this cost is relevant not only to Icelanders, but to all very small nations as well. Icelanders posed this question to themselves—and answered it by founding their own sovereign republic. Other small nations have answered it in different ways.

Icelanders are the smallest group, at least in the West, to found a sovereign state in modern times. Other small states—San Remo, Lichtenstein, the Vatican—exist, but these states, unlike Iceland, are not sovereign, nor do their peoples have their own language, their own national characteristics, and a long history. Luxembourg, with a population twice that of Iceland, is the second smallest European state enjoying the same rights under international law as Iceland. It is in many ways a remarkable country, and its leaders are held in high esteem both in Europe and the world generally. But its people are not a single nation in the same sense as Icelanders. They speak their own language, but do not write it: all printed matter in Luxembourg is in French or German. And although Luxembourg is an independent state according to international law, it is *not* an independent economic entity, since its economy in the main is inseparable from the Belgian. The currency is in practice the same. There is no university in Luxembourg; young people there look primarily to Belgium, France, or Germany for their university training. And even as citizens of an independent state, the people lack a characteristic Luxembourgian nationality. The people of Luxembourg have established their small state as a sovereign entity, yet one without an independent economy or an independent culture. Why did Icelanders take a different course? To answer this question, we will have to look briefly at their history.

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IV

Iceland was settled at a much later date than any of its Nordic neighbors, and it is therefore unique in that it is the only nation in the West with not only a knowledge of its origins, but written records of them as well. During the latter part of the ninth century A.D., stories were carried to Norway of a large, new uninhabited island far out in the ocean, an island with lush pastures for sheep, and an abundance of fish, seal, and waterfowl. At that time, one of the petty kings of Norway was in the process of subjugating the whole of the country. Many of the larger landholders were disinclined to accept his domination—and with it, the tax burden it would inevitably bring—and they looked to this new land to escape both. So did the crofters, who saw in the island the possibility of fleeing from poverty. Thus thousands searched out the new land, initially from Norway, but later from Scotland and Ireland also.

The island lay 600 miles from Norway across the northern Atlantic, and the voyages made to reach it—in vessels that were, at least according to modern standards, improbably small—were incredible undertakings. These northern pioneers founded a separate and independent state in the new land in 930. As Archbishop Adam of Bremen, writing the history of the bishops of Hamburg in 1075, put it: "*Apud illos non est rex, nisi tantum lex*"—"There is no king among them, only law." The population grew to about a third that of Norway—in proportion, about the same as the population of Great Britain compared to the United States today—and the society became a prosperous one with a richly developed culture. The books written in Icelandic—the Eddas, the sagas, the lawbooks, and histories—were a product of this culture and have rightfully earned their place in world literature.

In the thirteenth century, Norway gained control of Iceland, and a little more than a hundred years later, Norway—and Iceland with it—came under the hegemony of Denmark. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Iceland began its struggle for independence. Denmark granted home rule early in this century, and Iceland achieved independence at the end of the First World War. In 1944 it finally founded a republic.

Around the turn of the century, Iceland was one of the poorest countries in Europe. Since then, however, a modern industrial society has been built up on welfare principles, supported by the rich fishing

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grounds that surround the island and favorable conditions for producing hydroelectric and geothermal energy.

That Icelanders have managed to preserve their thousand-year-old culture is demonstrated most tellingly by the fact that they still speak the language of their forefathers. Any Icelandic child in fact can easily read the sagas of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The language, the oldest spoken in the Western world, was used throughout the Nordic lands and in various other places around the North Atlantic seaboard over a thousand years ago. Today, it is lost everywhere except Iceland.

Ancient languages, however, always have a problem coining new words in order to stay current, and this problem is magnified in an ancient Germanic language such as Icelandic, because words of Greek and Latin origin cannot be adopted readily. Thus words like telephone, radio, television, electricity, all require new names in Icelandic. Icelanders have solved this problem in two ways: by coining new Icelandic words, and by giving a new meaning to old ones long unused. A good example of the latter is the term *simi,* meaning "thread," a word that had fallen into disuse but that was revived when the telephone was introduced in Iceland. Another is *tolva,* the word for computer, which was invented by Professor Sigurdur Nordal, one of Iceland's foremost literary experts. *Tolva* comes from *tala,* "number," and means a device that manipulates numbers.

One last example: when I began teaching economics at the University of Iceland, after studying in Germany and Austria, and began to write on economics in my native tongue, I discovered, among other things, that there was no word for "investment." I coined *fjarfesting,* which means "binding of capital," and the word immediately gained currency. All Icelandic scholars have similar stories to tell.

The old Germanic poetic forms, long lost to other Germanic languages, have been preserved by the Icelanders alone. These forms are varied and complex. Few Icelanders know the rules themselves—they depend on the ear to detect a faulty or broken measure, much as it detects a false note in music—although some of the basic ones are taught in schools, and there are, of course, scholarly works on them. An example of the poetic form is the use of alliteration in the traditional quatrain. Two accented words in the first line must begin with the same consonant or a vowel, and there are rules governing the position of these words. The first accented word in the next line must

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then begin with the same consonant or another vowel. A certain country parson used to translate Icelandic poems into English, retaining the Icelandic meter. To illustrate the quatrain, he composed the following, including internal rhyme as well as end-rhyme:

> She is fine as morn in May
> Mild, divine and clever,
> As a shining summer day.
> She is mine forever.

The preservation of these ancient cultural traditions was the Icelanders' most forceful argument in their struggle for independence. Their loyalty to these cultural traditions throughout the long dark ages, moreover, meant that, in spite of poverty, nearly all Icelanders were literate. Thus the new skills of the technological age could be learned quickly: a poor fisherman easily mastered the work on a trawler; a struggling farmer became a good factory worker. Icelanders can thank their ancient cultural traditions not only for their independence, but also their present prosperity. That is why they will continue to preserve both traditions and independence, despite the smallness of their state and despite the cost.

V

Icelanders are a very good example of how the inhabitants of a small nation can live with a very old culture in a modern, independent, affluent state. By keeping faith with their ancient culture, they ultimately regained their independence. But, though it survived centuries of impoverishment, natural disasters, and foreign domination, that fidelity obviously could not always be sustained on rational or pragmatic grounds alone. Rather, its durability must be attributed to emotions. The rich reward of this devotion to the past was the preservation of education among the common people, which became the foundation for a new society in this century, a high-technology society with a very high standard of living.

As desirable as independence is, however, it is not only costly to the small nation, as Laxness pointed out, but can also be the cause of economic, social, and cultural disadvantages. The economic difficulties are not simply the lack of conditions for achieving large-scale production: that Icelanders maintain their own economic system—even though their annual GNP does not exceed the production of

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some industrial giants in the larger nations—is not at all incompatible with the principles of large-scale production. Their fishing fleet in fact is operated on a very large scale, and they are a major contributor of ocean products to one of the largest consumer markets in the world, the United States. But Icelanders are necessarily large-scale producers within a very narrow sphere. Their industries and national product are quite narrowly based, and are therefore very vulnerable to fluctuations both of nature and of markets. This is one of the main reasons inflation has been higher there and why Iceland has had more difficulty coping with it than her trading partners.

Nor is it easier to arrive at solutions in a small society than in a large one. On the contrary, these problems are *more* difficult to solve because of small circumstances and personal acquaintance. In cultural matters, too, smallness is a problem. Writers and poets might well complain that their audience is restricted to only those who can read Icelandic, as other artists can lament their own limited possibilities.

Nevertheless, a small nation can retain its independence and still live prosperously, and it can find the former to be valuable enough to outweigh the disadvantages. The inhabitants of small nations, however, must not close their eyes to the fact that the world has changed—indeed, continues to change—and that what was effective in the past may no longer work. Icelanders must realize that as they work to preserve their independence and continue their economic progress, they cannot rely on their culture with the same degree of assurance as in the past. If they do, they will surely encounter problems beyond their control, and both independence and culture will be put in jeopardy.

The problems ahead have nothing to do with preserving national identity and language in the face of foreign domination and power or with the recovery of a lost independence. Nor are they tied to our willingness to abandon outmoded methods of production for new and more progressive ones. Rather, they concern our potential for contributing to modern technology and world trade, and for taking part in peacekeeping and defense in the international arena. A many-faceted and flourishing culture can promote the preservation of nationality and language, and provide inspiration in the struggle for independence and economic viability as well. But it does not automatically improve a nation's ability to cope with new challenges in the areas of huge enterprises, international trade, or defense.

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By saying this I do not mean that Icelanders can or ought to neglect the preservation and strengthening of their culture. Of course they must strengthen and preserve it—always being on guard, however, against the delusion that culture alone is sufficient for the challenges of the future. Present-day Icelanders must take to heart the example of their countrymen who, poor and few though they were, sought to establish their own state on the basis of their old culture and old Nordic judicial system, in company with modern technology and modern social ideals. Their decision to do so is clearly vindicated by the political and economic well-being of Iceland today.

VI

At the same time that Icelanders, in fact all Nordic peoples, ought to—*must*—preserve their national characteristics, language, and culture, they must beware of isolating themselves. The closing off of a country to foster national awareness, culture, or economic growth is a tactic of the past. History shows us that such isolation was sometimes absolutely necessary, but it shows also that nationalistic arrogance, narrow-mindedness, and even belligerency were never far behind. In these times of high technology and large-scale production, isolationism can be a dangerous game to play, because it goes against not only the basic demands of modern technological progress and large-scale economic units, but also against the basic principles of modern social development.

Beyond close cooperation in economic matters and commerce—which already obtains in many states—nations must draw nearer together in their search for solutions to the problems of humanity itself. But can nations continue to preserve their own characteristics as they cooperate more and more among themselves and participate increasingly in international and worldwide organizations? This question has been the subject of extensive debate in all the Nordic countries.

Experience has taught us, beyond a doubt, that isolation is not a necessary condition for the preservation of national characteristics, language, and culture. The Scandinavian brand of cooperation—neither prescribed by law nor based on rigid legal principles, but rather on an awareness of common cultural values—has shown that good communications and close cooperation need not entail a weakening of national identity, and that nations which consider themselves re-

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lated to one another, and are thus closely connected, do not inevitably succumb to aping one another. On the contrary, cooperation and friendship can help them to strengthen their own search for cultural independence.

Events in world history during this century bear this point out remarkably well. The years following World War I saw the establishment of new states, many of them quite small, because of the desire to preserve national identity and to achieve autonomy—to which all national groupings and every nation, great or small, have the right. A combination of factors and circumstances, however, caused this basic policy to fail and contributed to the outbreak of World War II. Following that war, entirely different solutions were devised for the problems that issued from it. Prewar isolationism gave way to cooperation between states and nations, paving the way for greater economic growth and a better standard of living than ever before in human history. Yet, these were achieved without dulling national awareness or destroying cultural values.

A good example of this is the cooperation in defense matters between Iceland, the smallest Nordic country, and the United States. Iceland occupies an important strategic position in the North Atlantic, but because it has too few inhabitants to support its own strong defense, it cooperates, under the NATO agreement, with the United States, the most powerful member of NATO and the greatest world power. This cooperation has neither weakened Iceland's independence nor threatened its culture. Iceland, nonetheless, has its share of critics at home, primarily concerned that such cooperation will increase the danger of an attack on Iceland in case of war, but concerned also that, in the long run, this cooperation might become a threat to Icelandic national consciousness and even independence.

Not only is international cooperation based on democratic principles harmless to small countries; not only is such cooperation necessary if they are to have a fair share of the fruits of technological progress and the benefits of large-scale enterprises; it is also quite simply the best way for them, given the present state of world affairs, to preserve and strengthen the characteristics of small countries and small cultural entities. This may sound paradoxical, but it is not, simply because the individual member of any nation cannot appreciate that he is a leaf on an individual tree—even if only a little leaf on a little tree—until he realizes that the tree has deep-spreading roots

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and that its foliage is different from other trees. He cannot appreciate his knowledge of his forefathers, their history, their language, unless he becomes aware of other trees, with other roots and different foliage, of other people whose forefathers spoke different languages and whose experiences have been quite unlike theirs. When he realizes that the world is wondrously various, he will then understand fully that the history of man is the history of the diversity of human life; that civilization springs not from one root alone but from many; that the strength of world culture lies not in uniformity but in variety—just as a flowering meadow is beautiful because it has not just one kind of plant but a glorious blaze of color from many kinds. And that is why when the individual of one nation, great or small—and particularly the latter—comes into contact with other nations, it serves to strengthen his awareness of the value of belonging to his nation, of the fact that he has a part to play in the diversity of world culture, that the world would be a poorer and duller place without him, his nation, his language, and his national identity.

VII

I believe, therefore, that we ought not aim at a single state in Scandinavia, not even at an organized alliance, and above all, not at the creation of someone who might be called a "Scandinavian." On the contrary, our aim must be to ensure that the inhabitants of the Nordic countries will become truer Danes, Finns, Icelanders, Norwegians, and Swedes, and truer Faeroese, Greenlanders, and Samish. We must continue to be small nations, although this does not mean that we must therefore turn to isolation or increase the distance between ourselves and other nations. On the contrary, we must strengthen our own internal cooperation and our cooperation with other nations, bearing in mind always that we wish to continue to safeguard our characteristics, our nationalities, our cultures.

Five small states, comprising eight small nations, on the edge of the inhabitable world have somehow managed to create independent, free, prosperous societies, dedicated to justice in social affairs and tolerant of all shades of opinion—states that coexist in peace. This seems to be entirely remarkable. What is the impetus behind this development? I believe the Nordic countries have through experience learned that the independence and freedom of each nation has led to progress in their cultures and economies. They fully understand that

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no one state should govern the other, and from this, the desire for peaceful coexistence follows naturally. These little nations were quick to adopt the nineteenth century ideals of freedom and equality; democracy took firm root there, and intellectual freedom led to respect for the opinions of others. The long centuries of adaptation to the harsh northern climate produced a hardy and capable people. This, and the education of the common man, has assured these nations a high standard of living. And the ideals of equality that took root along with democracy have formed the basis of the welfare state.

Although it did not do so simultaneously, development in the five countries nevertheless trod a similar path; it was fostered by a fraternal cordiality, stemming from a common ancestry and a common history, but also from agreement on the basic principles of right and wrong, good and bad, and from similar ideas of how to build a society having claims to justice and freedom. Despite these feelings, however, each nation has nurtured a strong patriotism that it is careful to preserve. Each considers the present collaboration no obstacle to these feelings; on the contrary, it is an encouragement.

Thus it is no wonder that proposals for a Nordic state or union of states are invariably rejected, since no advantage that would accrue from such an alliance could be more important than the preservation of the culture and nationality of each individual state.

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